TUESDAY
April 2, 2024

BENGALURU
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NET BORROWING CAP

Constitution Bench to hear Kerala's plea

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EXCISE POLICY CASE

Kejriwal sent to 14-day judicial custody

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SECOND HIGHEST COLLECTION

GST revenues hit ₹1.78 lakh cr. in March

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PMLA

A law that has lost its way

A strange evolution of law linked to narcotics and money laundering

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ON THE PROWL

Boult, Chahal star in Royals' thumping win

SPORT » PAGE 15

NEARBY

Another mango season turns sour

BENGALURU
Dashing hopes of both farmers and lovers of the king of fruits, the mango production this year, which was supposed to be anywhere between 10-14 lakh tonnes, has come down to a mere 5 lakh tonnes owing to weather factors and pest attacks. » Page 2

Many candidates file papers

BENGALURU
With just three days left before the last date of filing nominations for the Lok Sabha polls , as many as 49 candidates submitted 55 sets of nominations on Monday. Raksha Ramaiah richest while Sowmya Reddy is the poorest in terms of assets. » Page 3

Centre and Congress spar over Katchatheevu issue

PM and External Affairs Minister Jaishankar flay previous Congress regimes for indifference towards the island and ceding fishing rights; Opposition quotes govt.'s 2015 RTI reply on issue

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

> The Congress and DMK raised the issue in Parliament as if they bear no responsibility for it, while they are the parties which did it
>
> **S. JAISHANKAR,** External Affairs Minister

> Will Foreign Minister Mr. Jaishankar please refer to the RTI reply dated 27-1-2015... the reply justified the circumstances under which India acknowledged that a small island belonged to Sri Lanka
>
> **P. CHIDAMBARAM,** Congress leader

The controversy over India "ceding" the island of Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka in 1974 escalated on Monday after Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged news reports on the issue for the second day and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar declared that previous Congress governments had given away the rights of Indian fishermen in that area.

Hitting back, the Congress quoted the government's Right to Information (RTI) reply on the issue in 2015, which said the island was situated on "the Sri Lankan side of the International Maritime Boundary Line".

Mr. Modi, in a post on X, flagged a second news report on the issue that said the DMK, under then Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, was kept in the loop when the Union government decided to give up its claims on Katchatheevu.

"Rhetoric aside, DMK has done NOTHING to safeguard Tamil Nadu's interests. New details emerging on #Katchatheevu have UNMASKED the DMK's double standards totally. Congress and DMK are family units. They only care that their own sons and daughters rise. They don't care for anyone else. Their callousness on Katchatheevu has harmed the interests of our poor fishermen and fisherwomen in particular," Mr. Modi said in his post.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Revisiting pact could affect ties: former diplomats

NEW DELHI
Any move by the government to revisit the 1974 India-Sri Lanka agreement on Katchatheevu island could have a broader diplomatic impact on India's ties in the region and raise questions about other bilateral negotiations, warned former diplomats. » PAGE 10

No coercive action over tax notices against Cong. in view of polls: I-T Dept.

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Amidst allegations of "tax terrorism", the Income Tax Department on Monday stated in the Supreme Court its resolve not to take any "coercive steps" against the Congress on tax demands of approximately ₹3,500 crore raised in March, in view of the Lok Sabha election.

At the very outset of the hearing before a Bench headed by Justice B.V. Nagarathna, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta stated that "since election is going on, we do not want any problem to arise for any political party... We will not take any coercive steps till the case is heard again on July 24, 2024".

"He [Mehta] has rendered me speechless..." senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, for the Congress, reacted to the unexpected turn of events.

Trouble had been mounting for the Congress with fresh notices from the Income Tax Department raising a tax demand of ₹1,745 crore for the assessment years 2014-15 to 2016-17.

With the latest notice, the department had raised a total tax demand of ₹3,567 crore from the Congress.

The fresh tax notices related to 2014-15 (₹663 crore), 2015-16 (around ₹664 crore) and 2016-17 (around ₹417 crore).

The authorities had ended the tax exemption available to political parties and had taxed the party for gross receipt based on a Delhi High Court order of March 2016.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Poll respite

I-T Dept. submits in SC that the Congress need not have any apprehensions over tax demands till July due to upcoming polls

- Total tax demand made of Congress amounts to **₹3,567 crore**
- In the latest notice, tax demand raised was **₹1,745 crore** for 2014-15 to 2016-17
- Tax authorities have already withdrawn **₹135 crore** from the party's accounts for other years
- Relief comes after party lost its appeal before I-T Appellate Tribunal and Delhi High Court

Israeli air strike destroys Iranian consulate in Syria

Associated Press
DAMASCUS

An Israeli air strike has destroyed the consular section of Iran's embassy in Syria, killing a senior Iranian military adviser among others, Syrian state media said on Monday.

The strike on the Iranian consulate building could mark an escalation of the Israeli military's ongoing targeting of Iranian military officials and allies in Syria, which has intensified since the onset of its war with Hamas.

Israel said it had no comment about the Syrian media reports.

Iranian state television Al-Alam and pan-Arab television station Al-Mayadeen said the strike killed Iranian military adviser Gen. Ali Reza Zahdi, who led the elite Quds Force in Lebanon and Syria until 2016.

Adding to the woes: Rescue workers in action at a destroyed building hit by an air strike in Damascus, Syria, on Monday. AP

Iranian Ambassador Hossein Akbari condemned Israel and said as many as seven people were killed, but first responders were still searching for any other bodies under the rubble. He said two police officers who guard the building were wounded.

Mr. Akbari vowed revenge for the strike "at the same magnitude and harshness".

South-interior Karnataka to get below normal rain

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After a hot March, the State is expected to see a dry spell in April as well. The India Meteorological Department updated the seasonal outlook for April to June and the rainfall and temperature outlook for April. It has forecasts below normal rainfall for south-interior Karnataka. "South-interior Karnataka is likely to see below normal rainfall, and parts of north-interior Karnataka are expected to see above normal rainfall," said A. Prasad, scientist, IMD, Bengaluru.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 2

New rule to save fliers from tiring wait aboard aircraft stuck by delays

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

Long delays due to reasons such as poor weather have on occasion forced airlines to confine passengers for up to 12 hours within an aircraft waiting on the ground for its turn for a take-off. But this is set to change soon.

In an important security reform for air travellers that seeks to ensure their convenience, the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has issued new standard operating protocols (SOPs) for airports and airlines.

In a first, these allow passengers who have deplaned and are escorted back to the terminal building to undergo a security check at the boarding gate itself if a flight is delayed due to either weather or technical issues or the death of a passenger onboard.

More ease: As per the new protocol, passengers who have deplaned can undergo a security check at the departure gate. R.V. MOORTHY

Currently, airlines are required to take passengers who have deplaned to the arrivals section of the airport where they have to re-enter the security queue. This is a long and tedious procedure and could escalate delays and is known to discourage airlines from disembarking passengers.

The BCAS issued the new protocol on March 30.

"The SOPs will be implemented once the airports have set up the requisite infrastructure and we have reviewed the same," BCAS Director-General Zulfiqar Hasan told *The Hindu*.

No timeline for implementation has yet been prescribed.

Airports will be required to earmark space at some of their boarding gates for "return boarding" where CISF personnel and x-ray machines will be deployed for frisking passengers and scanning cabin bags.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

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Issue Structure: (For detailed issue structure refer Prospectus dated March 28, 2024)

Face value	: ₹1,000 each	Minimum application size :	₹10,000 (10 NCDs) & in multiples of 1 NCD thereafter
Tenure (months)	: 13, 24, 36, 60 and 68		
Schemes	: 10 schemes with 10 ISIN's	Payout options :	Monthly, Annual & Cumulative

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Capitalised terms not defined herein shall have the same meaning as assigned to such terms in the Prospectus dated March 28, 2024.
DISCLAIMER OF THE ISSUER: ICL Fincorp Limited **("Company")**, subject to market conditions, and other considerations, is proposing a public issue of secured redeemable non-convertible debentures **("NCDs")** and has filed a prospectus dated March 28, 2024 **("Prospectus")** with the Registrar of Companies, Tamil Nadu at Chennai **("RoC")**. BSE Limited **("BSE")** and Securities and Exchange Board of India **("SEBI")**. The Prospectus is available on the website of the Company at www.iclfincorp.com, on the website of BSE at www.bseindia.com, on the website of the lead manager at www.saffronadvisor.com and on the website of SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in. Investors proposing to participate in the Issue should invest only on the basis of the information contained in the Prospectus. Investors should note that investment in the NCDs involves a high degree of risk and for details in relation to the same, refer to the Prospectus, including the section titled *"Risk Factors"* and *"Material Developments"* beginning on page 16 and 114 respectively of the Prospectus. Capitalised terms not defined herein shall have the same meaning as assigned to such terms in the Prospectus.
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LISTING: The NCDs offered through the Prospectus are proposed to be listed on BSE Limited **("BSE")** and BSE shall be the Designated Stock Exchange. Our Company has received an 'in-principle' approval from BSE vide their letter no. DCS/BM/PI-BOND/031/23-24 dated March 27, 2024.
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NAMES OF THE SIGNATORIES AT THE TIME OF SIGNING OF THE MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION COMPANY AND THE NUMBER OF SHARES SUBSCRIBED FOR BY THEM AT THE TIME OF SIGNING THE MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION: Given are the names of the signatories of the Memorandum of Association of the Company and the number of equity shares subscribed of face value of ₹10/- each by them at the time of signing of Memorandum of Association: J. Amarchand Kothari (10 equity shares allotted), A Badal Kanwar (10 equity shares allotted), K. Ashok Bohra (10 equity shares allotted), Subash Chand Jain (10 equity shares allotted), Mahaveer Chand Kothari (10 equity shares allotted), K. Ashok Kumar Jain (10 equity shares allotted) and Narendra Kumar Jain (10 equity shares allotted) at the time of incorporation of the Company aggregating to 70 Equity Shares of face value of ₹10/- each.

DISCLAIMER CLAUSE OF RBI: The company is having a valid certificate of registration dated June 9, 2016 under section 45 IA of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. A copy of the Prospectus has not been filed with or submitted to the Reserve Bank of India **("RBI")**. It is distinctly understood that the Prospectus should not in anyway be deemed or construed to be approved or vetted by RBI. RBI does not accept any responsibility or guarantee about the present position as to the financial soundness of the issuer or for the correctness of any of the statements or representations made or opinions expressed by the issuer and for discharge of liability by the issuer.
RBI neither accepts any responsibility nor guarantee for the payment of any amount due to any investor in respect of the proposed NCDs.

MITCON Credentia Trusteeship Services Limited (formerly known as MITCON Trusteeship Services Limited) under Regulation 8 of the SEBI NCS Regulations has by its letter dated March 4, 2024 given its consent for its appointment as Debenture Trustee to this issue and for its name to be included in the Prospectus and in all the subsequent periodical communications sent to the holders of the debentures issued pursuant to this Issue.
PUBLIC ISSUE ACCOUNT BANK: AXIS BANK LIMITED **SYNDICATE MEMBER:** SAFFRON CAPITAL ADVISORS PRIVATE LIMITED.

Reg. Office: No.61/1, VGP Complex, First Avenue, Ashok Nagar, Chennai-600 083, Tamil Nadu, India. **Corp. Office:** ICL Fincorp Limited, Main Road, Irinjalakuda, Thrissur-680121, Kerala, India.
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Upbeat Ramkumar hungry for silverware

Having won international tournaments at home, the 29-year-old looks back at his journey; hopes to partner Rohan Bopanna at the Paris Olympics in his quest for glory

GETTY IMAGES

Kamesh Srinivasan

There have been quite a few international tennis tournaments at home in the first quarter of this season, especially for the men. Few capitalised on them the way Ramkumar Ramanathan did, with his exploits in both singles and doubles.

After winning the doubles titles in the first two Challengers in Chennai and Bengaluru with Saketh Myneni, the 29-year-old Ramkumar shone bright in the Pune Challenger, briefly though, by knocking out the champion of the Bengaluru event Stefano Napolitano of Italy.

Later, after helping his employer Indian Oil to a bunch of medals in individual and team events in the Petroleum inter-unit event, Ramkumar won the singles title in Delhi in the $25,000 ITF tournament and finished runner-up the next week in Chandigarh.

An amiable person with a cheerful smile, Ramkumar may have often been misunderstood, or as some may perceive, wrongly projected, but he opted to discuss a variety of topics, very frankly.

Momentum back

"I have enjoyed the pain and everything which comes with it, the wins and losses. I feel my fitness has picked up and my momentum is back with some good matches in the last six months. God willing, the best is yet to come," said Ramkumar when congratulated for his good work.

Starting with the Davis Cup tie against Pakistan in Islamabad, followed by four Challengers, and two ITF events, it has been continuous tennis for many weeks. Ramkumar, who was ranked a career-best 111 in singles in 2018 and 58 in doubles in 2022, paced himself well to shine bright from start to finish.

"I am happy and have learnt a lot over these weeks. I had good wins along the way, and pushed myself to get some matches the last two weeks of singles. I feel that I can be there at the top again. I have been putting a lot of work back in Chennai. I have also been doing a lot of small things, like keeping a book and noting down points, reminding myself the way I want to approach every match. It helps me to stay in the present and be better on court. I am proud the way I competed all these eight weeks, irrespective of the results. I will keep working on the points to improve," said Ramkumar.

The finish was strong. It could have been two singles titles, but Khumoyun Sultanov of Uzbekistan was able to beat Ramkumar in the final in Chandigarh in the second ITF tournament.

"It is never easy to play a level down, after playing the Challengers. I knew that I would have tough matches, and prepared myself to fight for every single point, physically and mentally.

These two weeks were a fight for me. Just a bit disappointed about the result in the final against Sultanov. I had many break points, and 0-30 situation on opponent's serve. Just could not capitalise. I have noted as to what I could have done better. I am happy that tennis is coming along on the right track. Obviously a lot of things to work for the next events," said Ramkumar, as he put things in perspective.

The Challengers, four of them in a row in Chennai, Bengaluru, Pune and Delhi, did provide a lot of cheer for Ramkumar. But before that was the exhilarating experience of the Davis Cup in Islamabad.

"It was a great idea to have the preparatory camp in Delhi for the Davis Cup, and get some rhythm on grass", said Ramkumar, as he thanked the captain Rohit Rajpal, the coaches and the physios for their role in preparing the team nicely.

It was a thriller for Ramkumar against the old war horse, Aisam-Ul-Haq Qureshi. Ramkumar prevailed 6-7(3), 7-6(4), 6-0 in the first rubber in three sets. That set the tone for India's 4-0 triumph in the Davis Cup tie in Pakistan.

However, at 3-4 and 15-40 in the second set, it was a tricky situation for Ramkumar and the Indian camp. Ramkumar fired 20 aces in the match and wriggled out of the tight corner for a memorable victory, converting four of six breakpoints to seal the rubber.

"I don't think that I played a bad first set. But Aisam played clutch on first to win it in the tie-break. Our box was full of energy. I felt it and it helped me stay with him and keep it close. I am glad that I was able to turn it around and get that vital point for India. It was a nail biting match with so much of emotions. My dear friend Aisam played out of the world. All the Pakistan team members were extremely friendly. I was happy that tennis united us. Extremely happy that we won the tie on their soil. Was happy that I gave a chance for Niki Poonacha, to play the final rubber, as he is a great guy and has been doing well lately. I was glad that he got his first win. Sriram Balaji also played his part and of course, Yuki Bhambri and Saketh Myneni got us home safely with the doubles. Overall, a brilliant team effort," said Ramkumar.

After the emotional high, it was back to the pro circuit and Ramkumar tuned himself for the competitive grind. "As soon as I finished Davis Cup in Pakistan, I had to fly directly to Chennai for the singles match the next day. So, I prepared as much as I could, but couldn't get the job done against my Spanish opponent Roca Batalla.

"We train at the same club in Barcelona. I was sad after singles. But I was happy that me and Saketh fought hard and won the doubles title. Was happy getting a couple of good wins in singles in the Bengaluru Challenger. Fought hard and the reward came. My level was good, and I had a chance in the quarterfinals. But, due to a few bad line calls, I lost the quarterfinals in a close match. Me and Sake won the doubles again, which was great. Got to Pune on Monday, and played a fantastic match against Stefano Napolitano, from being a set point down, I won the match in two tie-breaks. I lost to the Russian Alexey Zakharov in the second match, even though I played well. In doubles, me and Saketh lost the semifinals by playing a very average match, which we could have won," said Ramkumar as he jogged through his memory.

The fourth Challenger in Delhi was hard to digest. "When I came to Delhi, the conditions were completely different. I was also a bit tired, and was struggling to adapt. So, I had a tough outing in Delhi, which is acceptable and no comments on that", said Ramkumar.

Quite thoughtfully, Ramkumar thanked all tournament Directors, Hiten Joshi, Sunil Yajaman, Sunder Iyer, Richa Bakshi and the AITA Secretary General, Anil Dhupar, for giving him the singles wild cards "with no questions asked".

Ramkumar assured that he would continue to focus on his singles game and keep getting better.

"I have proved myself doing well in singles. The focus will remain on singles and doubles. I love competing. I know the road ahead is not easy, but it is possible and I believe in myself, which is the most important thing. I will put in the work and leave the rest to the Almighty," he said.

The Asian Games doubles silver medal with Saketh Myneni in Hangzhou was a big morale-booster for Ramkumar, especially after all the criticism that he was chosen ahead of 10 better-ranked players.

"I want to thank God for making me achieve what I did in the Asian Games. I played a good singles match also, but lost to the eventual runner-up Yosuke Watanuki, in a close three-setter. I was very happy that I got the chance to play doubles and even more happy to win the medal. I believe that everything happens for a reason. I was there because I deserved to be there. I am ok with criticism. The selection was made by the committee and not me. In the past, I was higher ranked than others and was excluded. I was hurt then, but respected the decision of the committee. So, I was a bit sad, and didn't like it, to see other players questioning my selection in the media. It is in the past now. Me and Sake played well. We got better with each match. I have the medal. It could have been gold and it could have been no medal also," he said.

Best partner

The Olympics in Paris is around the corner. There are a few who believe that Ramkumar will make the best partner for Rohan Bopanna for a shot at the medal.

"Bops is a phenomenal player. He is a great example for all of us, especially the way he became World No. 1 at 43. I am happy that I won two of my biggest titles with Bops. I will cherish them all my life. I have so much respect for him. I will be happy to play Olympics with Bops, and we could be very dangerous together as a pair, as we have 100% record in ATP events. And I am feeling good with my tennis. I am sure Bops will agree on this! Jokes apart, it is Bops' decision on who he has the best shot with at the Olympics. Always wish him well regardless of his choice," said Ramkumar.

With his child coach T. Chandrasekaran travelling for most of his tournaments in the recent spell, Ramkumar was quite at home, competing at his best.

"I am grateful to have Chandra sir these weeks for the Indian stretch. I am grateful for his continuing contribution to my tennis career. He has been extremely supportive. He keeps making me believe that I can get into the top-100 in singles, and keeps motivating me from his heart. He is one of the main reason for me playing tennis and has made a huge contribution to my career," said Ramkumar. For the last two tournaments in Delhi and Chandigarh, Ramkumar had his mother Alagammal and father Ramanathan, taking turns to be with him. "Mom surprised me by coming to Delhi. It worked out well. She was my lucky charm and the singles title in Delhi will be special as I won the tournament in front of her. She should come more often. I am grateful and thankful to God that I made her proud," said Ramkumar.

He is quite used to having his father around in events. "My dad was enjoying his time in Chandigarh. I gave him a few heart attacks on way to the finals! But, had another positive week. It was tough mentally for me as I was physically a little drained. I pushed myself to the limit and competed well. I was happy to hear my dad say, 'Ram you are playing well.' Very rarely he says that but he meant it. Without my dad, I wouldn't be travelling the world and playing tennis. From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank my *Appa* and *Amma* for putting me in the sport, through a lot of struggles and sacrifices, in the early days. My sister Uma is also extremely supportive," he said.

It has been a fascinating journey and Ramkumar is keen and energetic to add many more lively chapters to his career.

THE GIST

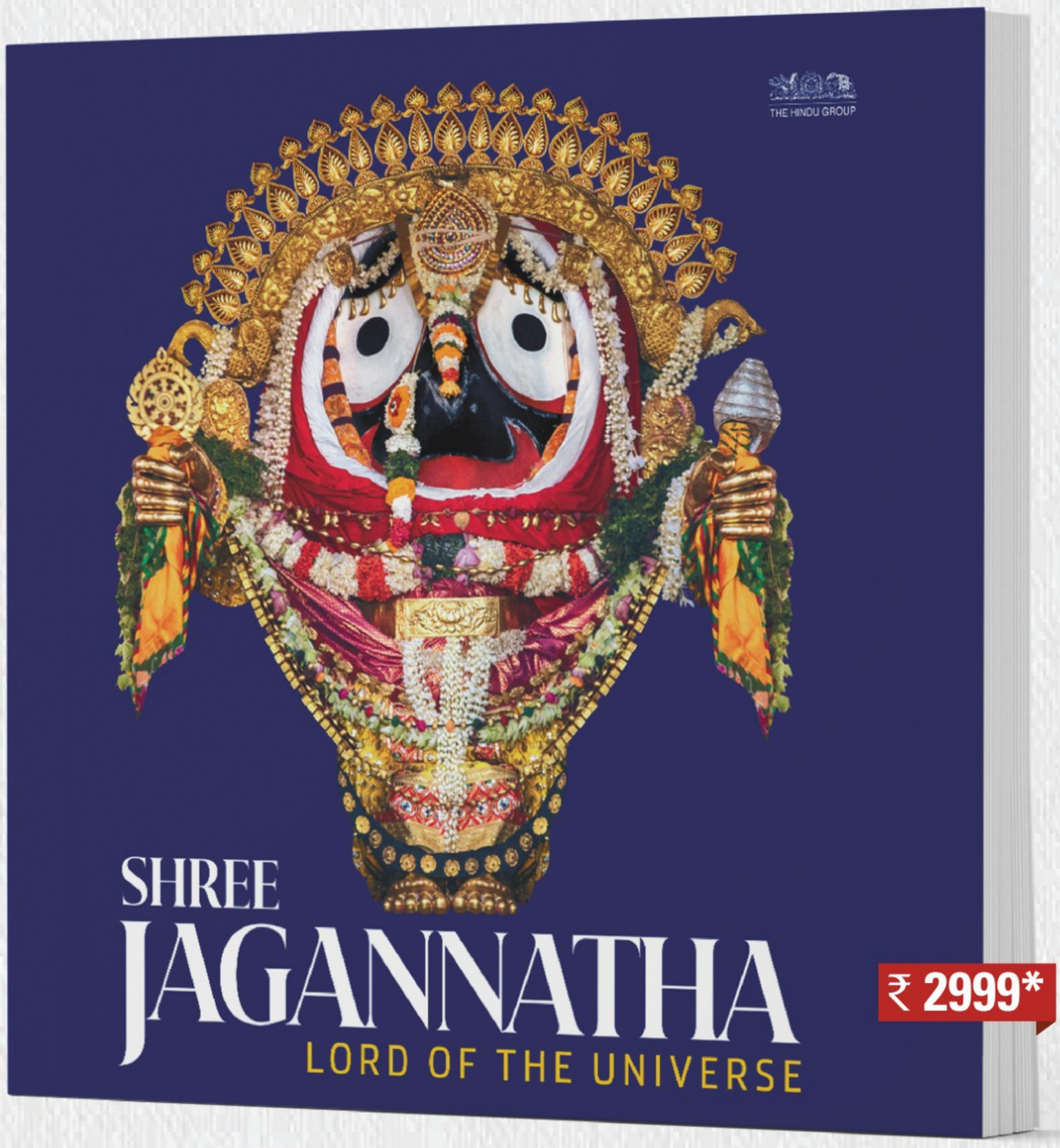
- The Hangzhou Asian Games doubles silver with Myneni was a big morale-booster for Ramkumar, especially after all the criticism that he was chosen ahead of 10 better-ranked players
- With child coach Chandrasekaran travelling with him for most of the tournaments, he says he feels at home
- The Paris Olympics is round the corner and there are a few who believe Ramkumar will make the best partner for Bopanna

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

THE HINDU GROUP

Shree Jagannatha- Lord of the Universe is a picture-rich coffee-table book on the fascinating Lord Jagannatha temple in Puri, Odisha.

The book is a collection of pictures and articles by well-known writers from Odisha on culture and religion. It covers the temple's history, the unique rituals that characterise Jagannatha-worship and, of course, the famous Ratha Yatra.



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From Page One

South-interior Karnataka to get below normal rain

He said the State might experience above normal maximum temperatures in most parts, including Bengaluru, in April.

"IMD Probability Rainfall Forecast for April 2024 #Karnataka North Interior Karnataka: Above Normal Rainfall South Interior Karnataka, Coastal & Malnad: Below Normal Rainfall," the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre posted on X (formerly Twitter).

The IMD Bengaluru forecasts dry weather in the State till April 5.

For April 6, IMD forecasts light rainfall at isolated places over Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Bidar, Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, Kodagu, Mandya, and Mysuru districts and dry weather over the remaining districts. On April 7, light rainfall is likely at isolated places over Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Uttara Kannada, Bagalkot, Belagavi, Bidar, Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri, Kalaburagi, Koppal, Raichur, Vijayapura, Yadgir, Ballari, Chamarajanagar, Chitradurga, Davangere, Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, Kodagu, Mandya, Mysuru, Shivamogga, Tumakuru, and Vijayanagara districts.

While the IMD forecasts light rainfall in the above districts, rainfall is likely to evade Bengaluru. "We are not seeing any cloud formation, and we might have rainfall only in the second week of April," Mr Prasad had said earlier.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (April 2, Tuesday), the following articles are available:

- Why are Ladakh's residents on a hunger strike? **bit.ly/ladakhprotest**
- Team led by PRL Ahmedabad finds ozone on Jupiter's moon **bit.ly/moonjupiter**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Another mango season turns sour with yield down to 30% of the usual

Weather and pests destroy flowers; farmers in Kthe State term it as the worst mango season in recent times

Jahnavi T. R.
BENGALURU

Although flowering was delayed this year, farmers and Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation hoped to get an average yield. However, the extreme heat conditions reversed their expectations FILE PHOTO

Dashing hopes of both farmers and lovers of the king of fruits, the mango production in Karnataka this year, which was supposed to be anywhere between 10-14 lakh metric tonnes, has come down to a mere 5 lakh metric tonnes owing to weather factors and pest attacks.

Although flowering was delayed this year, farmers and the Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation (KSMDMC) hoped to get an average yield. However, the extreme heat conditions reversed their expectations.

"This is the worst mango season I have seen in my life. In fields where we were getting 10 tonnes of mangos, we struggled to find 200-250 kgs. As the temperature kept increasing, we had no dew or rain this time, and all our flowers got burnt in the trees before they could set. We went through five rounds of medicines to revive them, but there was no use," said Chikka Byre Gowda, a mango farmer from Ramanagar district.

While mangos are grown across 2 lakh hectares of land in Karnataka, around 60% of this cultivation takes place in Kolar. There too, farmers are struggling to get a decent amount of yield. "Usually, flowering happened in December - January, but this time, there was only 10-15% flowering. By February, there was good flowering on all trees. By the time fruit setting was supposed to happen, flowers started dropping due to heat conditions. We needed one round of rain which never came," said Neelaturu Chinnappa Reddy, president, Kolar District Mango Growers' Association.

He added, "There were also attacks from thrips and hoppers which led to further dropping of flowers. Our extraneous efforts to control the attacks did not work. While Kolar district usually supplies 10-12 lakh metric tonnes of mangos, this time it might be just two to three lakh metric tonnes."

Mr. Reddy pointed out that unless the State government sets up good irrigation projects in Kolar, the future of mango farmers is quite bleak.

Mango board

The KSMDMC attributed the dropping of flowers to an imbalance between growth promoters and growth retardants in mango trees. "While there was profuse flowering in February, vegetative growth increased by the second week due to the increased presence of growth promoters due to weather conditions. Hence, flowers and even fruits that had begun to set dropped after that. It is an off-year, and we can expect only 30% of the usual yield," said C.G. Nagaraju, managing director, KSMDMC.

> By the time fruit setting was supposed to happen, flowers started dropping due to heat conditions. We needed one round of rain which never came.
>
> **NEELATURU CHINNAPPA REDDY**
> President, Kolar District Mango Growers' Association

Farmers on the other hand say that 30% is a hopeful estimation and the ground reality is worse.

"They have officially said 30%, but the farmers can get only 15% of their usual yield this year. There are at least 12,000 - 13,000 mango farmers in the Kanakapura, Channapattana, and Ramanagar regions and the government should announce some compensation to help them with their losses as it has been years now since they had a good year with mangos," said Dharanish Kumar, president, Kanakapura and Channapatna Mango Growers' Association.

Karsiri to open soon, mango mela by May

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Karsiri, KSMDMC's online portal where customers can directly order mangos from farmers and get them delivered to their doorsteps via India Post, is expected to begin operations by the second fortnight of April. The portal is currently being modified to facilitate bulk buying across districts.

With uncertainty looming over the supply of mangos to the market, the dates for the popular mango mela in Lalbagh are yet to be decided. "There will be small melas area-wise in Bengaluru, while the Lalbagh mela will be decided depending on when fruits come in from the growing regions," Mr. Nagaraju said. Meanwhile, mango varieties like Alphonso, Sendhoora and Malgova from Ramanagara, Koppal and Dharwad have already hit the markets, and are currently selling at anywhere between ₹180-230 per kg at HOPCOMS.

8,198 Jalamitras to act as force multipliers for water conservation

WATER WOES

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In the long run, Jalamitras will act as the eyes and ears of BWSSB on the ground. FILE PHOTO

A whopping 8,198 residents of the city, including activists, and active members of Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) among others, have registered themselves to work as Jalamitras, volunteers with the BWSSB to conserve water in the city. The initiative launched by Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) on March 15, is modelled on the lines of successful past initiatives like Shuchimitra, Keremitra among others.

"In just 15 days, we have got over 8,000 citizens register themselves as Jalamitras. This shows the kind of awareness of the crisis at hand and willingness to contribute to mitigating it. We are holding training sessions for these volunteers over the next two days," said Ram Prasath Manohar V., chairman, BWSSB. These Jalamitras will now work as force multipliers for BWSSB in conserving water on the ground, amidst a severe water crisis. In the initial phase, the Board intends to use Jalamitras to create awareness to conserve water and implement several conservation measures initiated amidst the crisis like not using potable water for non-essential purposes, installing aerators to all taps, put a stop to digging of illegal borewells among others.

"BWSSB has a staff strength of just over 2,000 employees, which is not enough in a city with a population of 1.4 crore. So in the long run, even after we tide over this crisis, Jalamitras will act as the eyes and ears of the Board on the ground. We intend to use them to alert us on leakages, water wastage, illegal water connections, and illegal borewell digging among others," Dr. Manohar said.

10% water supply cut from April 10

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has announced a 10% cut in supply to those who use between 40 lakh to 2 crore litres of water per day from April 10.

BWSSB has already announced a 20% water supply cut to 38 bulk users who consume over 2 crore litres of water every day. Through this, the Board is saving nearly 10 Million Litres per day of water daily. BWSSB chairman Ram Prasath Manohar V. chaired a meeting with users who consume between 40 lakh to 2 crore litres per day on Monday, and asked them to adopt the five principles of the "green star challenge" – to adopt water conservation technologies, increase the use of treated water, technology to monitor borewells, dig rainwater harvesting pits and creating awareness to users on these principles.

BTP temporarily halt BMRCL's Bannerghatta Road partial closure proposal over notification issue

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Vehicles moving on Bannerghatta Road between Anepalya Junction and MICO Signal, around Namma metro underground station at Adugodi, in Bengaluru on Monday. K. MURALI KUMAR

The Bengaluru Traffic Police have put on hold the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited's (BMRCL) proposal to partially close Bannerghatta Road near the Lakkasandra underground station for a year to facilitate metro construction activities.

On Saturday, BMRCL announced that north-bound traffic on Bannerghatta Main Road, from the MICO signal to the Anepalya junction, will be closed for a year starting Monday to facilitate the construction of the station's south side entry structure.

However, the Bengaluru traffic police did not allow the closure of the road on Monday, as the official notification from the traffic police had not been issued.

Adugodi Traffic police officials told *The Hindu* that despite BMRCL's announcement of the road closure, it cannot proceed until an official notification is issued, particularly considering the proposed closure's duration of one year.

"We have completed all the necessary arrangements to manage traffic along the stretch, including organising alternative routes. Once the notification is issued, we will proceed with closing the stretch as per BMRCL's request. The partial road closure could potentially happen within the next two to three days," a traffic police official added.

According to the earlier media statement by BMRCL, traffic moving on Bannerghatta Road towards Anepalya junction will have to take a right turn at the MICO signal to reach the Adugodi signal via the BOSCH link road and then take a left.

There is no diversion for the traffic moving towards Dairy Circle from the Anepalya junction.

Traffic from Dairy Circle towards Shantinagar is to take a left at the 7th Main Road of Wilson Garden.

According to BMRCL officials, construction is currently in progress for the underground metro station on the Pink Line.

This segment is part of Phase 2 of the project, known as Reach 6, extending from Kalena Agrahara to Nagawara, covering a total distance of 21.26 km and comprising 18 stations.

Reach 6 includes an elevated section spanning 7.50 km with six stations from Kalena Agrahara to Tavarekere, as well as an underground section spanning 13.76 km with 12 stations from Diary Circle to Nagavara.

BMRCL anticipates the Pink Line to commence operations in 2025.

G.S Krishnan re-elected ABLE head

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

ABLE (Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises), the biotech industry organisation, has re-elected its existing president, G.S Krishnan for another term of two years between April 2024 and 2026.

Krishnan, with three decades of experience in the bio-industrial sector, is currently – Director, External stakeholder relations at Danish biotech company, Novonesis and an Independent Consultant/Advisor.

Furnish bank account details to KEA by April 10 to avail refund

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The candidates who have not yet availed the refund of the caution deposit/excess fees paid while getting admission for professional courses, including medical and engineering have to furnish their bank details by April 10, the Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA) said on Monday.

The bank details must be furnished by the candidates through KEA's website. "Those who remitted excess fees (more than the prescribed fee) for respective courses, and those who cancelled their seats at various rounds, are eligible to avail themselves of the refund. However, refunds have not been processed for about 1,500 applicants as there are errors in the bank details provided by them," according to a press release from KEA.

The KEA has also published the list of candidates who have errors in their bank details on its website and such candidates are required to upload their correct bank details online. The release also said that applicants of degree and postgraduate courses can also get the refund.

CET applications can be edited after exams

The KEA also said that the corrections in applications submitted by candidates for CET - 24 will be allowed after the completion of examination.

"The dates for enabling editing of any erroneous information in the application will be notified shortly," the release said.

Despite ban, lottery tickets from Kerala are being sold openly in parts of State

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

Old Kerala lottery tickets from Yakove's collection. FILE PHOTO

In Puttur, a quiet town in Coastal Karnataka, Kerala government-run lottery tickets are brazenly sold to people despite a blanket ban on the sale of lotteries. The Karnataka government banned the sale of all types of lotteries in 2007 when H.D. Kumaraswamy was the Chief Minister.

The Hindu found a small paan shop at Manjalpadpu in Bolwar West where tickets were sold openly. The tickets are sold at ₹40. While the first prize is ₹75 lakh, the value of the second prize is ₹10 lakh. The draw date is on Tuesday.

A shopkeeper, upon being asked how he got the ticket, said he secured it from an agent from Kerala and they give it to retailers. The prize winner can claim the prize amount either directly or by post or through Nationalised Bank/ Scheduled Bank/State Cooperative Bank/District 20 Cooperative Bank. Prize claims up to and including ₹1 lakh will be sanctioned by the District Lottery Officer, he said. Prize claims above rupees ₹1 lakh and up to and including ₹20 lakh will be sanctioned by the Deputy Director of Lotteries.

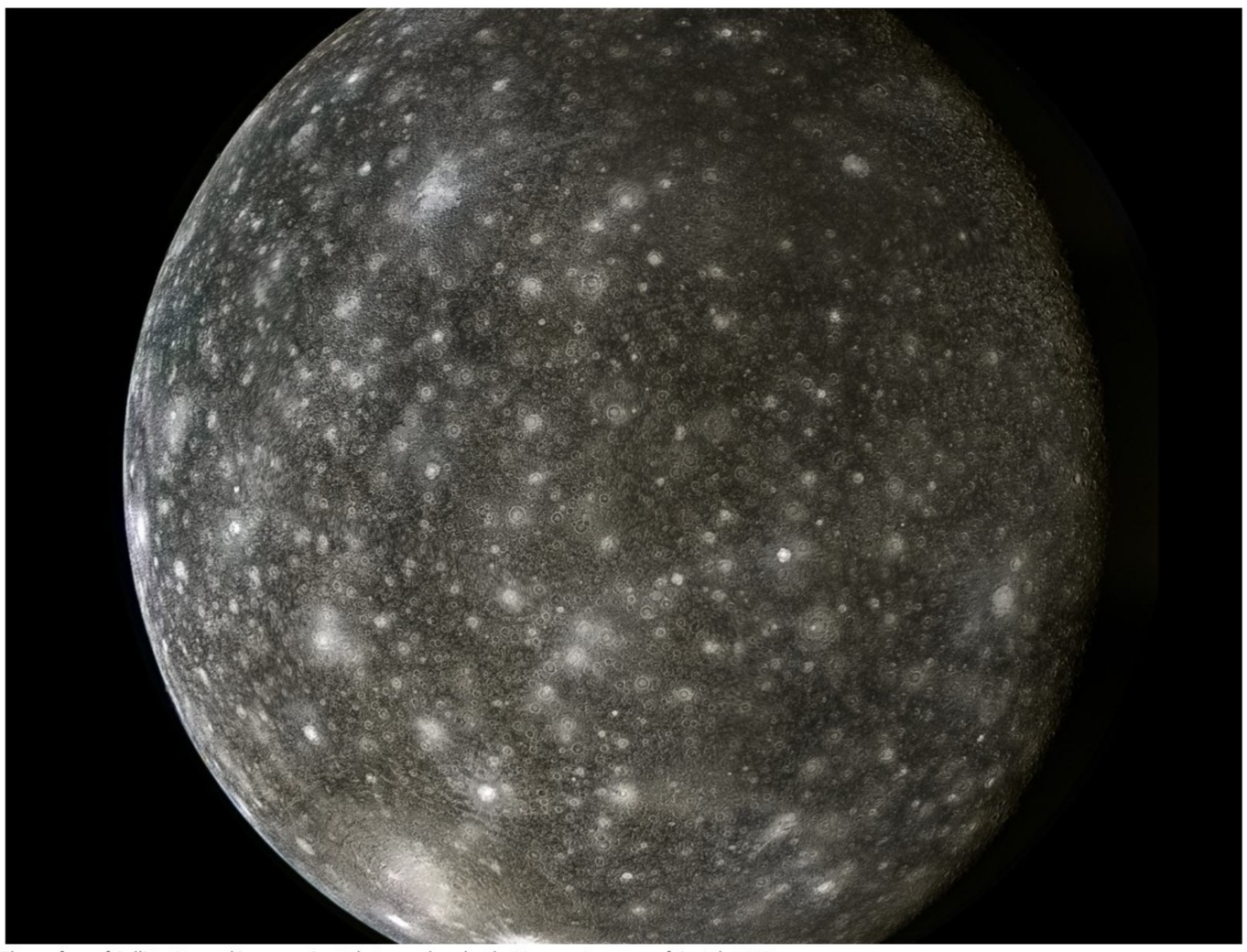
He added that the Kerala government settles claims even if the place of residence is Karnataka or anywhere in India.

After it was brought to the notice of the Dakshina Kannada Superintendent of Police, C.B. Ryshyanth, he said, "After this was brought to my notice, we booked a case and detained the person who was selling lottery tickets in Puttur. The police will further take action in the future to stop this practice in this town."

Team led by PRL Ahmedabad finds ozone on Jupiter's moon

Scientists are currently studying various celestial bodies in the solar system that show signs of ozone, suggesting the existence of stable atmospheric conditions and, by extension, the possibility of them being able to host life

Tejasri Gururaj



The surface of Callisto imaged in approximately true colour by the Voyager 2 spacecraft in July 1979. NASA

An international team of scientists, including from India, has discovered strong evidence indicating the presence of ozone on Jupiter's moon, Callisto, shedding light on the complex chemical processes taking place on icy celestial bodies in the Solar System.

The study was published in the March 2024 issue of the journal *Icarus*. It outlines the researchers' investigation into the chemical evolution of 'SO2 astrochemical ice', which is ice primarily composed of sulphur dioxide (SO2) in the presence of ultraviolet irradiation.

This shed light on the chemical processes and composition of the surface of Callisto. By analysing the data of the UV absorption spectra of the irradiated ice samples, the team was able to identify a distinct signature indicating the formation of ozone.

They corroborated their findings by comparing them with data from the Hubble Space Telescope to understand Callisto's environment and the potential habitability of icy moons in the Solar System.

The importance of ozone

The earth has life not just because it found a way to originate here; it also has the resources to thrive, evolve, and diversify. These resources include sunlight containing the "right" frequencies of radiation, water, a stable atmosphere providing a stable supply of the requisite gases at the right temperature, and various compounds required for the life-forms' biochemical processes.

This said, not all emissions from the sun are good for organisms on earth. Ultraviolet radiation in particular is harmful to many species (but also useful to some others). Two of its components, called ultraviolet-B and ultraviolet-C, of wavelengths 290–320 nanometres and 100-280 nanometres respectively, can damage DNA, trigger mutations, and increase the risk of skin cancer and cataracts in humans.

Ultraviolet light has also been known to inhibit plant growth and have detrimental effects on various organisms. This is why the ozone layer is a crucial part of the earth's atmosphere: it completely absorbs ultraviolet-B and ultraviolet-C radiation.

The ozone molecule is composed of three oxygen atoms bonded together. The ozone layer, found in the lower part of the earth's stratosphere, around 15-35 km above ground, serves as a shield. Without the ozone layer, ultraviolet radiation levels would be much higher on the planet's surface, rendering it uninhabitable for many species and disrupting entire ecosystems.

Scientists are currently studying various celestial bodies in the Solar System that show signs of ozone, suggesting the existence of stable atmospheric conditions and, by extension, the possibility of their being able to host life.

Callisto and its unique environment

After Saturn, Jupiter has the most moons in the Solar System. Callisto is one of Jupiter's largest moons and the third-largest moon in the Solar System after Ganymede and Titan.

Callisto, despites its impressive size, is distinguished by its composition. Despite being as big as the planet Mercury, it has less than half as much mass. Callisto is primarily composed of water ice, rocky materials, sulphur dioxide, and some organic compounds. These substances make the moon a potential candidate for supporting life in the solar system beyond the earth.

Callisto's surface is heavily cratered, indicating a long history of being struck by asteroids and comets. (It may have the oldest surface in the Solar System, in fact.) It also lacks the extensive seismic activity seen on some of Jupiter's other moons, such as Io and Europa.

The presence of relatively few geological features suggests Callisto's surface is geologically inactive. In other words, its surface has likely been relatively stable for a long time. This stability could be vital to preserve any subsurface ocean or potential habitats beneath the icy crust.

The detection of sulphur dioxide on Callisto's surface has encouraged this team of scientists to conduct spectroscopic observations to gain a better understanding of the moon's surface composition and formation.

Recreating conditions on the earth

Scientists led by R. Ramachandran, of the Atomic, Molecular, and Optical Physics Division, Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, set out to investigate the chemical evolution of sulphur dioxide ice under irradiation, leading to the formation of ozone.

Scientists have previously demonstrated this process in laboratory experiments. The current team's aim was to recreate the conditions required for this process on the surface of Callisto when sunlight hits its surface. To do this, the researchers used vacuum ultraviolet photons, which mimic the solar radiation that reaches the moon's surface.

> The ozone molecule is composed of three oxygen atoms bonded together. The ozone layer, found in the lower part of the earth's stratosphere, around 15–35 km above ground, serves as a shield against ultraviolet radiation

The experiments were conducted at the National Synchrotron Radiation Research Centre (NSRRC) in Taiwan, which provided access to high-energy radiation sources required to recreate the radiation coming from the Sun.

To model the surface of Callisto, the researchers placed a substrate of lithium fluoride in a chamber with very low pressure. This environment recreated conditions similar to those found in outer space. The sulphur dioxide ice samples were deposited onto the substrate, setting the stage for the final step: observing the absorption spectrum.

The absorption spectrum is the unique fingerprint of a substance. It shows the wavelengths of light it absorbs, providing insights into its composition and properties.

The team carefully controlled the temperature of the sulphur dioxide ice samples throughout the experiment.

The samples were initially kept at a low temperature of around 9 K (-264.15 degrees C), in line with the conditions on Callisto's surface. Then they slowly warmed it up to 120 K to resemble different environmental scenarios.

In this process, they irradiated the ice with vacuum-ultraviolet photons (of wavelength 137.7 nanometres) and recorded its ultraviolet absorption spectrum during and after the irradiation using a photomultiplier tube detector. This device measures low levels of electromagnetic radiation by converting photons into electrical signals.

Ozone and potential habitability

The ultraviolet absorption spectrum revealed the formation of ozone after the sulphur dioxide ice samples were irradiated. This was evidenced by a distinct signature in the absorption spectrum.

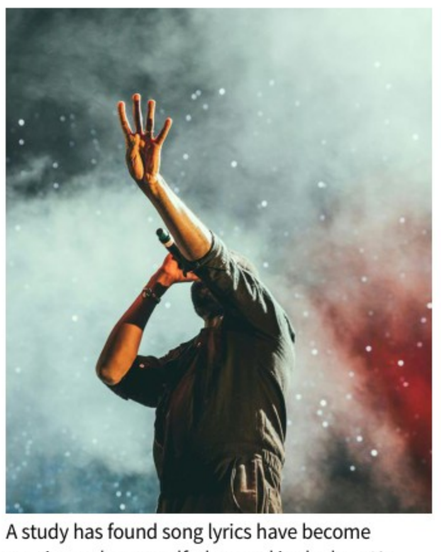
The researchers also compared their experimental data with data collected by the Hubble Space Telescope, which had also suggested the presence of sulphur dioxide and ozone on the surface of Callisto in 1997.

The discovery of ozone on Callisto suggests the presence of oxygen, which in turn is a fundamental ingredient required for the formation of complex molecules required for life (as we know it), such as amino acids, raising questions about the moon's habitability. This extends to other icy moons in our solar system, potentially informing our understanding of habitable conditions beyond Earth.

In addition to the ozone, the researchers observed an unidentified band in the absorption spectrum - similar to that observed on Ganymede in 1996 - hinting at a common molecular source in their surface compositions or chemical processes.

This finding could provide valuable insights into geological and atmospheric processes on these moons. In particular, it could help us to understand the precise mechanisms that led to the formation of Jupiter and its moons, which remain topics of active research.

(Tejasri Gururaj is a freelance science writer and journalist.)



A study has found song lyrics have become angrier and more self-obsessed in the last 40 years. AUSTIN NEILL/UNSPLASH

Song lyrics are getting simpler, more repetitive, says study

Agence France Presse

Song lyrics really are becoming simpler and more repetitive, according to a study published on March 28.

Lyrics have also become angrier and more self-obsessed over the last 40 years, the study found, reinforcing the opinions of cranky, ageing music fans everywhere.

A team of European researchers analysed the words in more than 12,000 English-language songs across the genres of rap, country, pop, R&B and rock from 1980 to 2020.

Before detailing how lyrics have become more basic, the study pointed out that U.S. singer-songwriting legend Bob Dylan – who rose to fame in the 1960s – has won a Nobel Prize in literature.

Senior study author Eva Zangerle, an expert on recommendation systems at Austria's University of Innsbruck, declined to single out an individual newer artist for having simple lyrics.

But she emphasised that lyrics can be a "mirror of society" which reflect how a culture's values, emotions and preoccupations change over time.

Over the 40 years studied, there was repeated upheaval in how people listened to music. The vinyl records and cassette tapes of the 1980s gave way to the CDs of the 90s, then the arrival of the internet led to the algorithm-driven streaming platforms of today.

For the study, published in the journal *Scientific Reports*, the researchers examined the emotions expressed in lyrics, how many different and complicated words were used, and how often they were repeated.

There was a decrease in positive, joyful lyrics and a rise in expressions of anger, disgust or sadness. Lyrics have also become more self-obsessed, with words such as 'me' becoming popular

"Across all genres, lyrics had a tendency to become more simple and more repetitive," Dr. Zangerle summarised.

The results also confirmed previous research which had shown a decrease in positive, joyful lyrics over time and a rise in those that express anger, disgust or sadness. Lyrics have also become more self-obsessed, with words such as "me" becoming much more popular.

The repetition rose most in rap over the decades, Dr. Zangerle said.

The researchers also investigated which songs the fans of different genres looked up on the lyric website Genius. Unlike other genres, rock fans most often looked up lyrics from older songs, rather than new ones.

Another way that music has changed is that "the first 10-15 seconds are highly decisive for whether we skip the song or not," Dr. Zangerle said.

Previous research has also suggested that people tend to listen to music more in the background these days, according to her. Put simply, songs with more choruses that repeat basic lyrics appear to be more popular.

"Lyrics should stick easier nowadays, simply because they are easier to memorise," Dr. Zangerle said. "This is also something that I experience when I listen to the radio."

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Is there alien life in the Solar System?

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

This Jovian moon is the most geologically active planetary body in the Solar System, rendering life on this body very unlikely – but not impossible, especially since all that activity keeps it quite warm. Name this moon.

QUESTION 2

Data collected in 2015–2018 suggested the Solar System's largest asteroid may have a large subsurface ocean of water, but the evidence is weak. Very salty water is still expected to flow to its surface and may contain microbial life. Name this asteroid.

QUESTION 3

This moon is the only planetary body in the Solar System other than the earth to have a complete cycle of a liquid on its surface. On the earth, it's made of water. On this moon, it's hydrocarbons — and this presents the possibility of hosting life. Name the moon.

QUESTION 4

This Neptunian moon has a mysterious feature: it's the only moon in the Solar System rotating in the direction opposite to that of its host planet. Scientists expect the radioactive decay of the rock in this moon's interior is releasing enough heat to keep its mantle, made of water, in a liquid state, raising the possibility of life. Name the moon.

QUESTION 5

NASA spacecraft have found this Saturnian moon may contain an underground water ocean. The moon also ejects plumes from the subsurface through the ice shell, into space, containing salt water and organic molecules, hinting at the possibility of life. Name the moon.

Answers to March 28 quiz:

1. Ink that renders numbers in different colours at different colours – **Ans: Optically variable ink**
2. Print that prints features that rise a little above the note surface – **Ans: Intaglio**
3. Numbers printed in small lettering between the Gandhi portrait and a vertical band – **Ans: Microlettering**
4. Narrow ribbon strip woven across the note since 2000 – **Ans: Security thread**
5. Position at which banknotes reveal their value in an image on the obverse – **Ans: Flat at eye level**

Visual: **Mysuru**

First contact: Shilpi Nigam Chandra | K.N. Viswanathan | Yogapriya K.

Visual: This is an artist's impression of the _____ spacecraft. NASA launched it in 2023 and it will reach Jupiter in 2031 to study the moons Ganymede, Callisto, and Europa for signs of life. Fill in the blank with its name (full form). ESA (CC BY-SA IGO 3.0)

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Many candidates, including ex-Ministers, file papers

Raksha Ramaiah is the richest while Sowmya Reddy is the poorest in terms of assets

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

With just three days left before the last date of filing nominations for the April 26 Lok Sabha polls in Karnataka, as many as 49 candidates submitted 55 sets of nominations on Monday.

Among them were BJP MP from Bengaluru Central P.C. Mohan and Congress candidate from Bengaluru South Sowmya Reddy, and former MLAs V. Somanna and K. Sudhakar, who served as Ministers in the previous BJP government. The last two filed nominations from Tumkuru and Chickballapur parliamentary constituencies, respectively.

BJP candidate from Bengaluru Central constituency P.C. Mohan, along with B.S. Yediyurappa and other leaders, during a rally before he filed his nomination papers on Monday. PTI

Sowmya Reddy, the Congress candidate for Bengaluru South constituency, arrives to file her nomination papers on Monday. Also present was KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Raksha Ramaiah
Congress candidate Raksha Ramaiah, son of former Minister M.R. Seetharam, who is contesting against Dr. Sudhakar in Chikkaballapur, has declared total assets of ₹168.85 crore.

This includes assets (movable and immovable) worth ₹82.83 crore held by him, ₹17.02 crore held by by his wife Ashita Raksha Ramaiah apart from his and his son Samarr Ramaiah's Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) share of ₹69 crore, as per the details provided in the affidavit. Movable assets under his name are worth ₹54.98 crore while immovable assets are ₹27.85 crore.

P.C. Mohan
Incumbent Bengaluru Central MP P.C. Mohan has declared total assets of ₹81.28 crore. This includes movable and immovable assets of his family including his wife's and his share in Hindu Undivided Family (HUF).

According to his affidavit, while he holds assets worth ₹54.68 crore, including his HUF share, his wife, Shyla Mohan, holds total assets worth ₹26.6 crore. Movable assets under his name are worth ₹10.46 crore, while immovable assets are ₹19.18 crore, with the total coming to ₹29.64 crore.Mr. Mohan owns a Toyota Fortuner purchased in 2012 worth ₹3 lakh each, huge investments in the realty sector, bank deposits and jewellery worth ₹33.7 lakh. His wife owns jewellery, including gold and silver ornaments, worth ₹35.2 lakh, according to the affidavit.

Lok Sabha election 2024

According to a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms-National Election Watch last year, Mr. Mohan grabbed the second spot in the list of top 10 MPs who registered an increase in their assets between 2009 and 2019. In 2009, when Mr. Mohan fought his maiden electoral battle, he declared assets worth ₹5.37 crore.

V. Somanna
Former Housing Minister V. Somanna and his wife together hold assets worth ₹60.77 crore. In his affidavit submitted to the Election Commission along with the nomination, Mr. Somanna has declared movable assets worth ₹ 9.68 crore, including ₹4.38 crore held by his wife J. Shailaja.

His immovable assets are worth ₹51.21 - including 38.65 crore by his wife. In 2023 Assembly elections, he declared total assets of ₹48 crore and liabilities of ₹7 crore.

K. Sudhakar
Former Health and Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar has declared total assets of about ₹31.75 crore. This includes movable and immovable assets of his family that includes his wife and three dependent children.

His assets have grown by ₹2.75 crore from ₹29 crore in the 2023 Assembly polls to ₹31.75 crore now. This includes assets worth ₹24.04 crore held by his wife, Preethi G.A., as per the affidavit. Movable assets under his name are worth ₹2.69 crore while immovable assets are ₹5.01 crore, with the total coming to ₹7.71 crore, as per the affidavit.

Mr. Sudhakar owns a Lancer and three tractors worth ₹64.33 lakh each, and jewellery worth ₹9.55 lakh. His wife owns jewellery including gold, diamond and silver ornaments worth ₹68 lakh, according to the affidavit.

Sowmya Reddy
Sowmya Reddy, former MLA and daughter of Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, who is contesting against incumbent BJP MP Tejasvi Surya in Bengaluru South, has declared total assets of ₹ 2.29 crore including movable and immovable properties.

According to her affidavit submitted along with her nomination, Ms Sowmya has declared assets worth ₹1.01 crore and immovable assets worth ₹1.28 crore.

She owns an Innova 2018 model car worth ₹19.85 lakh apart from gold and silver jewellery worth ₹28.02 lakh and a residential flat worth ₹1.28 crore. She has six pending criminal cases against her in various courts.

In the 2023 Assembly polls, she had lost to BJP candidate C.K. Ramamurthy by 16 votes. She had declared assets worth ₹2.11 crore and liabilities of ₹ 1.33 crore in 2023.

Yaduveer affidavit shows no immovable properties

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Scion of the erstwhile royal family of Mysore, Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, who filed his nomination papers as the BJP candidate for Mysuru Lok Sabha seat on Monday, declared assets worth a total of ₹4.99 crore. The assets in the names of his spouse and dependent are worth ₹1.04 crore and ₹3.63 crore, respectively.

The affidavit does not include any immovable properties like agricultural land, non-agricultural land or commercial or residential buildings in his name, his spouse or dependent's names.

Six-year-old boy hit by truck dies

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A six-year-old boy was killed when he was hit by a truck that was reversing in Vinobanagar slum on Monday afternoon.

The boy Ashwanth, residing in a nearby slum, was relieving himself behind the truck, which was parked on the roadside to unload goods.

Police said the truck driver, identified as Abdul Razaq, failed to check the rear of the truck and reversed it. As a result, Ashwanth was run over.

By the time passers-by rushed to his help, the boy was dead.

The city market police arrested the driver and seized the truck for further investigation.

Timings
BENGALURU

TUESDAY, APR. 02	
RISE	06:15 SET 18:31
RISE	00:44 SET 12:13
WEDNESDAY, APR. 03	
RISE	06:14 SET 18:31
RISE	01:41 SET 13:16
THURSDAY, APR. 04	
RISE	06:14 SET 18:31
RISE	02:35 SET 14:17

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	23
Mysuru	36	23
Bengaluru	35	23

Bengaluru Today
35°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm. Night also will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
34°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and uneasy. Night will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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FIR against foundation for allegedly damaging lake

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Malligavad Foundation, a well-known environmental NGO, is in the dock as the chief officer of Chandapura town Municipal Council has filed a complaint against it for allegedly damaging Heelalige Lake in Attibele on Monday.

Based on the complaint filed by Srinivas, chief officer from Chandapura TMC, the Sarjapura police registered an FIR charging Malligavad Foundation and its owner under The Karnataka Lake Conservation and Development Authority Act, section 430 (Mischief by injury to works of irrigation or by wrongfully diverting water) and 447 (trespass) for further investigation.

Mr. Srinivas, in his complaint, said the foundation had undertaken lake rejuvenation and development work without getting prior permission and damaged the area with many unscientific works.

The inspection conducted by the officials found many flaws in the development work based on the complaint filed by the Anekal farmers' committee. The committee earlier filed a complaint with the Chief Minister's Office, accusing Malligavad Foundation, backed by a private company, of making drastic changes to the lake design unauthorizedly and destroying the flora and fauna of the lake. The committee, in its complaint, explained how a ring bund was created around the lake to block all the water coming to the lake. As a result, now the lake is unable to impound rainwater coming from the catchment area, which in turn has severely depleted the groundwater in the area.

Two bikers arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Two women driving a car at night were allegedly harassed by a group of men on bikes March 31.

They were going from Madiwala towards Koramangala.

The accused allegedly complained about her putting the indicator on one side but moving in the opposite direction. They allegedly tried to stop the two women.

The driver cried out for help, while her friend recorded a video of the accused. This helped the police track down two of the accused within a few hours.

Efforts are on to track down the third accused, the police said.

Meanwhile, the BJP has accused the Congress government of failure to provide security to women.

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

World Bank's growth forecast for Asia this year

4.50 in percentage. The World Bank, in its latest report, also says that debt, trade barriers and policy uncertainties dull the region's economic dynamism. AP

India's hydroelectricity output records steepest fall

16.30 in percentage. The drop coincided with the share of renewables sliding since the Prime Minister made commitments to boost solar and wind capacity. REUTERS

Rise in maximum temperature expected in North India

2-3 degrees C. The Met office has predicted a drastic rise in temperature in many parts of North India. However as most of the wheat crop is harvest-ready, it won't impact its production. PTI

Y-o-y increase in coal sector's output in February 2024

11.6 in percentage. As per the index of eight core industries, the coal industry has demonstrated sustained double-digit growth over the past eight months. PTI

Palestinians killed till Monday in Gaza since October 7

32,845 The war has displaced most of the people and driven a third of its residents to the brink of famine. AP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Ladakh's protest; a hunger for justice

What are the key demands of the LAB-KDA representatives in negotiations with the Centre? What are the main pressures on local resources in Ladakh, particularly water and land? How does tourism growth contribute to resource strain in Ladakh?

EXPLAINER

Kavita Upadhyay

The story so far:

On March 6, in Leh, a town situated at about 3,500 metres in the cold, arid Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh, Sonam Wangchuk, Ladakh's famous educationist and environmentalist, began a 21-day hunger strike that he called a "climate fast". The strike was in support of thousands of Ladakh residents who have been demanding Statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, so they can make decisions regarding the use and management of resources such as land and water, which they currently can't. Mr. Wangchuk discontinued his hunger strike on March 26, as he urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah to "prove that they are statesmen". The strike is currently being continued by women in Leh. If their demands stay unmet, the youth, monks, and the elderly have said they will join the hunger strike as well, in phases.

Call to action: A child holds a placard during Sonam Wangchuk's hunger strike protest. ANI

THE GIST

- Sonam Wangchuk's hunger strike in Leh calls for Ladakh's Statehood and inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution to empower locals in decision-making, following the reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir into separate Union Territories in 2019.
- Rapid urbanisation and tourism growth are straining Ladakh's resources, particularly water, leading to concerns over sustainability and equitable access. Dependence on underground water, exacerbated by tourism, is highlighted as a key issue.
- Ladakh faces increasing risks from climate change, including glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), permafrost degradation, and rising temperatures.
- Despite these challenges, mining, renewable energy projects, and tourism continue to grow, exacerbating environmental concerns.

How has the formation of UTs affected the decision-making powers of Ladakh?

In August 2019, the State of Jammu and Kashmir was split into two UTs: Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. It ended people's exclusive rights to land and jobs.

Under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, Ladakh became a UT without a legislature.

"Our UT is administered by a Lieutenant Governor, who is not a Ladakh resident, and yet is appointed to take decisions for our future," said Jigmat Paljor, coordinator of Leh Apex Body (LAB), a collective of political, social, religious, and student organisations of the Buddhist-majority Leh district.

Several bureaucrats in key positions, influencing decisions for the region's future, were also not residents of Ladakh, Sajjad Kargili, a core committee member of the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) of the Muslim-majority Kargil district, said.

Similar to LAB, KDA is a collective of Kargil's political, social, religious, and student organisations.

Mr. Kargili further said the existing Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs) in Leh and Kargil were rendered powerless after the national government declared Ladakh a UT.

The draft Ladakh Industrial Land Allotment Policy, 2023 is a case in point. While the LAHDCs have the powers to make decisions on land use and its management, the draft policy, which has been designed to attract investments in Ladakh, completely excludes them from having any powers related to land allotment and lease-related decision-making.

Mr. Paljor said villagers along the border region in Ladakh were losing grazing land to China, as well as to industries planning on establishing renewable energy projects in the region, and yet the affected residents lacked the authority to intervene in matters concerning their own land.

The LAB and the KDA have contended that the Sixth Schedule could help tackle these issues because it enables the establishment of regional and district councils with the authority to make laws regarding land use for grazing, agriculture, residential purposes, and other purposes that cater to the residents' interests.

Considering more than 97% of Ladakh's population of over 2.74 lakh (2011 Census) is tribal, the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes recommended in 2019 that Ladakh be brought under the Sixth Schedule.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) too in its manifestos, ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha and 2020 LAHDC elections, had promised to bring Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule. It remains unmet.

In an effort to persuade the BJP at the Union government to bring Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule, LAB-KDA representatives have engaged in discussions with various Ministers on at least 10 occasions between 2020 and March 4 this year. A few of these negotiations, including the most recent one on March 4, have happened with Mr. Shah.

Mr. Kargili, who has been participating in the negotiations with the Centre, said LAB-KDA's demands since 2021 have included safeguards under the Sixth Schedule, either Statehood for Ladakh or declaring it a UT with a legislature, a separate Public Service Commission for Ladakh, and separate parliamentary seats for Kargil and Leh. The Centre has not yet accepted them.

"The current hunger strike is a result of numerous unsuccessful negotiations with the Centre," Mr. Kargili said.

What are the pressures on local resources?

According to recent data from the Ministry of Tourism, Ladakh is witnessing a high influx of domestic tourists. In 2022, more than five lakh domestic tourists visited the region. In Leh alone, which is Ladakh's largest town, while just over half a lakh domestic and foreign tourists visited in 2007, by 2018 the number had risen to 3.2 lakh. A research article published in 2019 stated that the built area in the town had increased from 36 hectares in 1969 to 196 hectares in 2017.

Rapid urbanisation and increasing tourist footfall are exerting significant pressure on resources in Ladakh, particularly water.

A report on water-related issues in Leh published in 2019 by Bremen Overseas Research and Development Association, South Asia (BORDA-SA), and Ladakh Ecological Development Group calculated that in Leh, a tourist used about 100 litres of water a day in summers and 60 litres in winters whereas a local used about 75 litres a day in summers and 50 litres in winters. The poor, especially migrant workers, had access to only 25-35 litres per person per day. To meet these requirements, the dependence on underground water, which is often contaminated, had increased, the report found.

Stanzin Tsephel, former regional director of BORDA-SA and a co-author of the report, said the issue was with water management rather than availability.

The pressure on resources is especially high during peak tourist season, between May and July each year, when about 70% of tourists visit the UT, Deleks Namgyal, president, All Ladakh Tour Operators Association, said.

However, Mr. Namgyal was worried about the possible narrative against tourism the ongoing hunger strike could feed. "We want tourists to visit Ladakh because it is important for our region's economy, but we want sustainable tourism and we are working towards it," he said.

How does climate change threaten the region?

In the last two decades, Ladakh has been affected by several floods, landslides, and extreme rainfall events. For instance, in August 2010, several parts of Ladakh, especially Leh, were hit by flash floods. Nearly 255 people died in the deluge. In August 2014, a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF), caused when a glacial lake is breached, damaged houses and bridges in Gya village.

More recently, in August 2021, a GLOF near Rumbak village also damaged roads and a bridge.

A study published in 2020 estimated that Ladakh has 192 glacial lakes. Several research articles also state that due to increasing temperature caused by global warming, the number and sizes of glacial lakes in the Himalaya are increasing, and glaciers are shrinking.

This trend has increased the threat of possible GLOFs in Ladakh, especially from proglacial lakes that are formed at the edge of glaciers, said Irfan Rashid, a glaciologist from the University of Kashmir, who conducts research in the UT, which lies in the Trans-Himalayan region.

"The increased temperatures are also resulting in permafrost degradation and are causing mudflows in Ladakh," Dr. Rashid added.

According to Sonam Lotus, a scientist at the India Meteorological Department's Meteorological Centre at Leh, the trend over the past few years shows slight increase in the region's minimum temperature.

While the lowest minimum temperature recorded in 2011 was minus 23.6 degrees C, in 2023, 2022, and 2021, it was minus 16.8 degrees C, minus 18 degrees C, and minus 16 degrees C, respectively, Mr. Lotus said.

Despite the challenges posed by climate change, mining and renewable energy companies are eyeing Ladakh, and tourism-related activities are on a rise.

With significant tourist influx, pollutants from vehicular traffic (like black carbon) will settle on snow and ice and expedite melting.

Mohammad Farooq Azam of the Indian Institute of Technology, Indore, who has undertaken glacio-hydrological studies in Ladakh, said mining activities might increase slope instability, making them landslide-prone. Dust from mining that will settle on glaciers could also accelerate their melting.

Kavita Upadhyay is an independent journalist and researcher who writes on issues of environmental governance in the Indian Himalayan Region

Zameer to campaign with Rahul Gandhi

Karnataka Housing Minister and the Muslim face of the Congress B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan will now undertake a three-day campaign for the party in Wayanad and Alleppey where party leaders Rahul Gandhi and K.C. Venugopal respectively are contesting. Mr. Khan will take part in a roadshow and public meetings to be held by Mr. Gandhi on Wednesday after filing his nominations.

Similarly, he will participate in a meeting of Muslim leaders in Alleppey on Thursday. He will also be meeting Muslim religious leaders in both the constituencies.

Mr. Khan will also campaign in Telangana, where he had campaigned during the Assembly elections too.

B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan

BBP to remain closed on polling day

The Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBP) will remain closed on April 26 in view of the Lok Sabha elections. All the units of BBP like the zoo, the safari and the butterfly park will not be available for public viewing on the polling day in Karnataka.

"We urge all the voters of Karnataka to participate actively in the festival of democracy and voice their opinion for the voiceless wildlife and forests and their conservation. However, on April 30 (Tuesday), all the units of Bannerghatta Biological Park will remain open to the public. General public may avail the benefit of visiting the park on this day," said the Bannerghatta Biological Park in a statement.

> Sowmya Reddy did not lose the Assembly election, but was defeated by officials. I heard that the officials who were involved later apologised to her father Ramalinga Reddy.
>
> **D. K. SHIVAKUMAR,** Deputy Chief Minister

BJP flags off campaign vehicles

The BJP on Monday flagged off five poll campaign vehicles for the use of star campaigners throughout the State. The vehicles are fitted with public address system and podium for the leaders to address people. The party also flagged off a bulletproof vehicle that would be used by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

> We know how to build coordination with our alliance partner. It is better D.K. Shivakumar thinks about how to manage his own Congress workers.
>
> **V. SUNIL KUMAR,** BJP State convener for Lok Sabha Election Management Committee

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at an election rally at Biligere in Varuna Assembly constituency, near Mysuru, on Monday. M.A. SRIRAM

CM links victory on home turf to his future

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has made it clear that the stakes were high for him in the coming Lok Sabha election in Chamarajanagar and Mysuru constituencies.

Kicking off his three-day election campaign in the two Lok Sabha constituencies by addressing a rally on Monday at Biligere in his home constituency of Varuna, which is part of the Chamarajanagar (reserved for SC) Lok Sabha segment, Mr. Siddaramaiah made an impassioned appeal to people to give the Congress a lead of 60,000 votes in Varuna, but also indirectly linked his continuation in the Chief Minister's post to the performance of the Congress candidate in the constituency.

Though the Varuna Assembly constituency is part of Mysuru district, the home constituency of Mr. Siddaramaiah is part of the Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha segment along with Nanjangud, T. Narsipur, and H.D. Kote Assembly constituencies. Kollegal, Gundlupet, Chamarajanagar, and Hanur constitute the remaining four Assembly constituencies of the constituency.

'Big lead is important'

Introducing the Congress candidate Sunil Bose as Social Welfare Minister H.C. Mahadevappa's son, Mr. Siddaramaiah appealed to the gathering to give him a lead of at least 60,000 votes. "If you give him a lead of 60,000 votes, I will be happy. Nobody will be able to touch me," he said, before asking the voters for their overwhelming support to the Congress candidate if they wished to see him continuing at the helm.

Earlier, he thanked the voters of Varuna for electing him to the Assembly in 2013 and 2023, which helped him become Chief Minister on both occasions.

During his visit to Mysuru last week, Mr. Siddaramaiah not only addressed party workers from Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, and Kodagu districts - Virajpet and Madikeri Assembly constituencies of Kodagu are part of Mysuru Lok Sabha constituency - but also participated in functions to admit several leaders from the BJP and the JD(S) into the Congress.

By mentioning Mysuru and Chamarajanagar among the 20 Lok Sabha constituencies that the Congress was confident of winning, Mr. Siddaramaiah had indicated the significance he attached to the party's victory in these constituencies.

Even though he was against fielding his son and former Varuna MLA Yathindra from Mysuru, Mr. Siddaramaiah has indicated that the candidature of Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) spokesperson M. Lakshmana, a Vokkaliga, has his backing.

After his campaign meetings in Varuna and T. Narsipur Assembly constituencies on Monday, Mr. Siddaramaiah will be addressing an election rally in Chamaraja Assembly constituency and holding a meeting with the Congress leaders of Chamundeshwari Assembly constituency on Tuesday.

Both Chamaraja and Chamundeshwari are part of the Mysuru Lok Sabha constituency along with Krishnaraja, Narasimharaja, Hunsur, Periyapatna, and Madikeri and Virajpet segments of Kodagu district.

On Wednesday, Mr. Siddaramaiah is scheduled to accompany Mr. Bose and Mr. Lakshmana while they file their nomination papers in Chamarajanagar and Mysuru.

Congress banks on 'silent' women beneficiaries of guarantee schemes

The BJP, meanwhile, is creating awareness about the development works under the Narendra Modi government to gain their support

WOMEN POWER

Sharath S. Srivatsa
BENGALURU

The role of women voters and their impact on the election results of 28 Lok Sabha constituencies in Karnataka are being keenly watched. While the Congress seems to be confident of securing their support from the guarantee schemes, the Opposition BJP is pushing the "Modi Ki Guarantee" narrative of development.

Relief amidst strife

Women voters outnumber men in 17 Lok Sabha constituencies, and are being seen as silent electors with an independent choice in most cases.

Though political affiliation, patriarchal set-up, caste and community considerations among others, normally dictate the choices, guarantee benefits coming as a relief during the time of price rise are being seen as among the biggest influences on the voting pattern among women this election.

Political insiders across the spectrum believe that women were among the biggest chunk who voted for the BJP in 2019.

In Karnataka, of the total 5.42 crore voters (as on March 16), 2.7 crore or nearly 50% are women, and the gender ratio in the electoral rolls has been 999. As many as 1.23 crore women, of the total eligible 1.33 crore, are direct beneficiaries of the Gruha Lakshmi scheme, with monthly government assistance of ₹2,000, and women also benefit from Shakti, the free travel scheme for women in public transport.

Besides, the families benefit from the Gruha Jyothi (free electricity up to 200 units), the Anna Bhagya (₹170 per person/month), and the Yuva Nidhi, the scholarship scheme.

Caste calculations

"The Congress through the reach of the guarantees has built a strong narrative among the OBCs, the SCs, and the STs to counter the anti-Hindu narrative built against it. That is why the Congress is looking stronger in central Karnataka region and some pockets in Kalyana Karnataka region where the OBCs, the SCs, and the STs are high in number," a BJP source said.

"Though many women beneficiaries among the OBCs, the SCs, and the STs are likely to favour the Congress, many beneficiaries from the upper castes, including those in the economically-weaker sections, are likely to vote for the BJP despite the benefits."

Benefits of the guarantee schemes during the time of price rise are being seen as among the biggest influences on the voting pattern among women in this election. FILE PHOTO

However, a Congress source said that those who have not received the benefits due to technical issues are unlikely to vote for the party, while not all who have received the benefits will favour the Congress. The State government is set to spend about ₹52,000 crore towards the five guarantee schemes this fiscal.

'Seem to be happy'

Multiple sources among anganwadi workers, who were part of a recent survey on guarantee schemes, also believe that the women could play a key role in the poll outcome based on guarantee benefits.

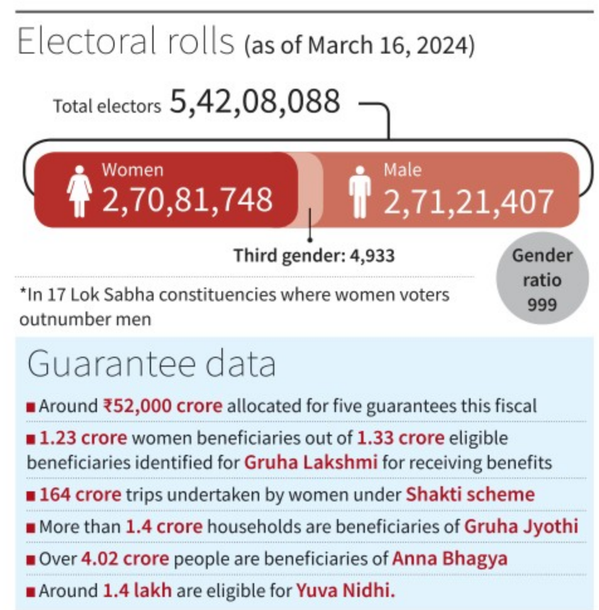
"Rural women are often silent about their political preferences. They have benefitted immensely from the schemes when the prices of essential commodities increased. They seem to be happy with the schemes and are likely to vote for the Congress in a good number," said a leader of anganwadi workers.

Another BJP source said that the party leaders were not publicly criticising the guarantees to prevent an "anti-poor" narrative being set around it.

Local leaders are speaking about the "ill effects" of guarantees and creating awareness about the development works under the Narendra Modi government.

"Problems of guarantees such as development work having stalled owing to lack of funds, schoolchildren in rural areas not getting adequate transport owing to the Shakti scheme, and massive power cuts despite the Gruha Jyothi are being highlighted at the ground level to counter the guarantees," the source said.

Exuding confidence of the Congress attracting votes from beneficiaries of the guarantee schemes, chairman of the State-level committee on implementation of the five guarantees schemes H.M. Revanna said: "The elections will be fought on the lines of our guarantees against the lies of Mr. Modi. The BJP has even copied our guarantees. Our ground-level workers would start reaching out to beneficiary families from this week and seek votes for the party on the basis of guarantee benefits."



Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar during a roadshow as part of the election campaign in support of the Congress candidate Venkataramane Gowda in Mandya on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

DKS mocks Kumaraswamy's 'touring talkies' politics

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU/MANDYA

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Monday said the former Chief Minister and the JD(S) candidate in Mandya constituency H.D. Kumaraswamy is "hopping from one district to another" during elections.

"In a democracy anyone can contest elections from anywhere but Mr. Kumaraswamy has been hopping from one place to another. Mr. Kumaraswamy left Hassan for Ramanagara district and now has moved to Mandya district. You gave power to Mr. Kumaraswamy but he did not retain it. Now, he has joined hands with the same people who brought him down from power," the KPCC chief said.

"Mr. Kumaraswamy used to say that Ramanagara was his *karma bhoomi* but now he has come to Mandya. Ramanagara made him MLA, MP, and a Chief Minister and made his father a Prime Minister. Now, he has ditched it. He doesn't have any respect for the people who nurture him politically," he said, and added that the people of Mandya vote for their pride and self-respect and do not entertain "touring talkies" politics.

He was speaking at a rally for the submission of nomination papers by the Congress candidate Venkataramane Gowda, popularly known as "Star Chandru", in Mandya.

'Cong. should have set up panel to decide candidates'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Senior leader of the Congress and Minister for Food and Civil Supplies K.H. Muniyappa said that instead of fielding candidates from outside in Kolar and Bagalkot constituencies, the party should have set up a core committee for discussing the pros and the cons of each candidate before announcing the list of candidates.

Mr. Muniyappa has been sulking after the party denied ticket to his son-in-law Chikka Peddanna to contest from Kolar in the Lok Sabha election on April 26.

The party has fielded K.V. Gowtham, president of the Bengaluru Central District Congress Committee.

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Muniyappa said he has suggested that the party high command form a core committee to look into the issue of not only selecting candidates for elections but also for discussions on major issues, he said.

Mr. Muniyappa added that the party should have fielded a "consensus candidate" instead of buckling under the pressure of factional groups.

Some rebels fall in line ahead of Shah's visit to Bengaluru today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The BJP State unit is looking forward to the visit of its key strategist Amit Shah to Bengaluru on Tuesday, to provide a final touch to the party's strategies as it hopes that his visit would help strengthen its poll preparations.

The party is confident that Mr. Shah's visit will help ensure better co-ordination with its coalition partner, the JD(S), as he is presiding over a meeting of a co-ordination committee of allies, besides taking part in a joint roadshow in Channapatna along with the JD(S) top leader H.D. Kumaraswamy.

Series of parleys

Ahead of his visit, party leaders were busy with the task of setting the house in order as top State leaders, including B.S. Yediyurappa, B.Y. Vijayendra, and Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R. Ashok, held a series of parleys with disappointed ticket aspirants to douse any dissidence in the last few days.

MLA relents

Their efforts paid results as M. Chandrappa, Holalkere MLA, and his son Raghuchandan, who were upset over the party giving ticket to Govind Karjol in Chitradurga by ignoring the candidature of the latter, met Mr. Yediyurappa and Mr. Vijayendra in Bengaluru on Monday and announced that they would work for the success of the party in the constituency.

Amit Shah

The father-son duo had earlier threatened to raise a banner of revolt against the party for bringing an "outsider" as the candidate to Chitradurga.

However, senior leader K.S. Eshwarappa is the only rebel who has remained stubborn as he has refused to change his decision to contest against the party's official candidate B.Y. Raghavendra in Shivamogga.

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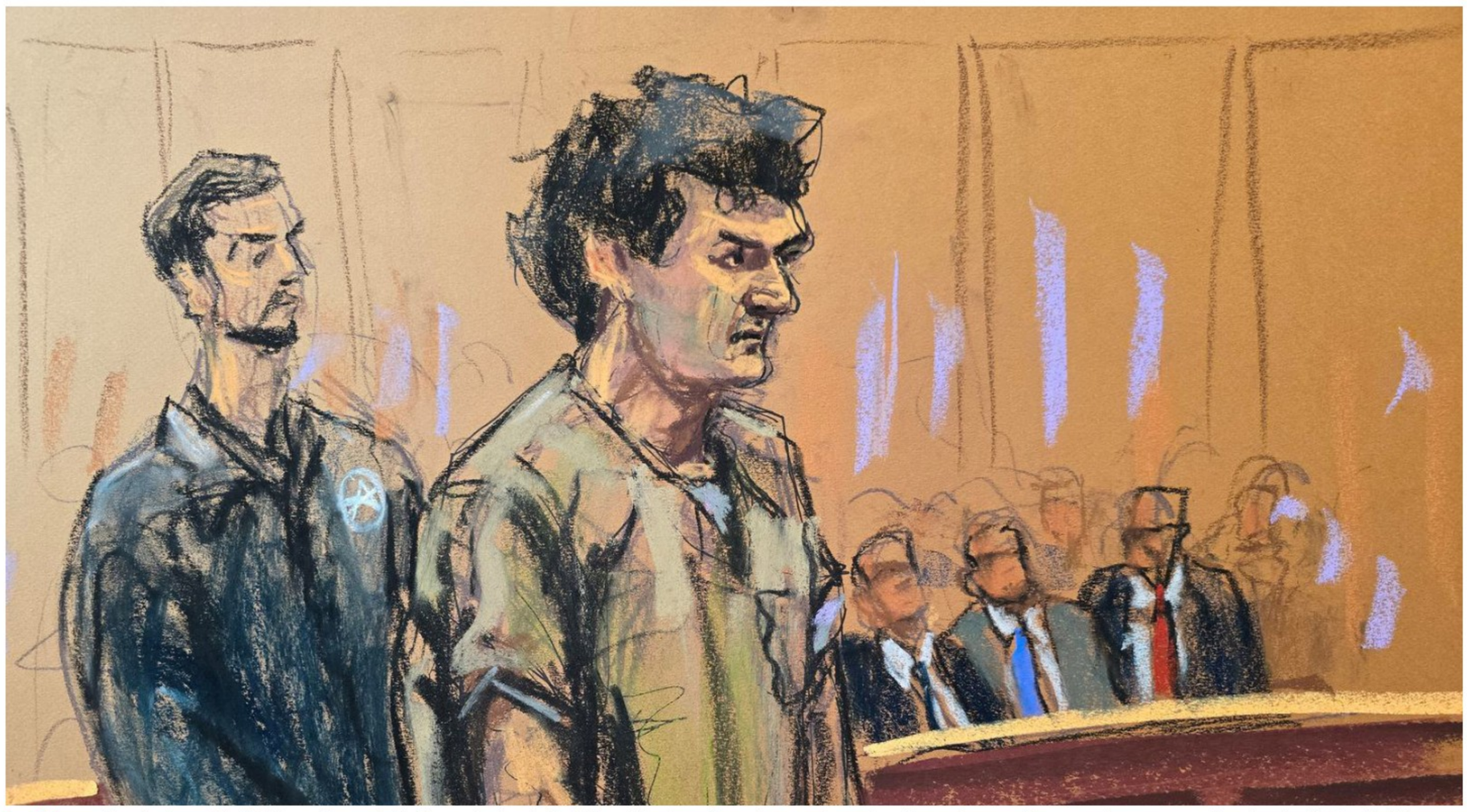


Legal drama: Sam Bankman-Fried's high-profile arrest, his disgraced return to the U.S., and the dramatic court proceedings where his own former colleagues and even a romantic partner testified against him made headlines worldwide. REUTERS

How will Bankman-Fried's legal fallout impact the crypto market's stability?

Former FTX CEO Sam Bankman-Fried has been sentenced to 25 years in prison for orchestrating one of the largest financial frauds in history, involving at least $8 billion of customer funds; the sentencing serves as a stark warning to crypto entrepreneurs about the consequences of regulatory violations

Sahana Venugopal

Sam Bankman-Fried, the former CEO of the collapsed cryptocurrency exchange FTX, was sentenced to 25 years in prison on March 28, having been found guilty of multiple counts of fraud in 2023 after the spectacular crash of his crypto exchange and business.

Almost one and a half years after the crash, what does the sentencing mean for the crypto sector and its investors?

What are the full terms of the sentence?

While Bankman-Fried's lawyers tried to push for a shorter prison sentence of just a few years, prosecutors wanted to see him in prison for 40 to 50 years. Meanwhile, the maximum possible sentence was 110 years.

Throughout a month-long trial in 2023, Bankman-Fried's legal team tried to steer away from the image of him being a malicious fraudster who stole crypto investors' money and instead painted a portrait of a well-intentioned businessman who had been let down by his trusted associates.

Attorney Mark Mukasey referred to Bankman-Fried as an "awkward math nerd," spoke about his autism, and pushed for a shorter sentence so that his client would be able to start a family.

When he was sentenced to 25 years in prison and three years of supervised release, Bankman-Fried accepted that FTX customers had suffered and that such an acknowledgment was "missing" from what he had spoken about during the trial. He also expressed regret about the way he treated his former colleagues.

Bankman-Fried, a former billionaire, will also have to give up around $11 billion as part of the sentence.

During the legal proceedings, it was established that customers lost at least $8 billion, though this figure may vary due to the volatile nature of cryptocurrencies' prices.

The judge authorised the government to use the funds recovered through the forfeiture process to compensate victims, per the U.S. Department of Justice direction released on March 28.

Bankman-Fried's lawyer is planning to appeal.

What were the charges against Sam Bankman-Fried?

FTX collapsed in late 2022 as customers panicked about the health of the exchange and tried to rapidly pull billions of dollars, triggering a liquidity crisis. It was later established that Bankman-Fried misused customer funds to prop up Alameda Research, a cryptocurrency trading firm. Bankman-Fried was arrested in the Bahamas a month later and was brought back to the U.S. to face trial.

He was found guilty of seven counts in total, made up of two counts of wire fraud conspiracy, two counts of wire fraud, one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering, one count of conspiracy to commit commodities fraud, and one count of conspiracy to commit securities fraud.

In a statement on March 28, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Damian Williams, used the sentencing to issue a warning that focused on Bankman-Fried as a financial criminal rather than a fraudster in the crypto industry.

"Samuel Bankman-Fried orchestrated one of the largest financial frauds in history, stealing over $8 billion of his customers' money," said Williams. "His deliberate and ongoing lies demonstrated a brazen disregard for customers' expectations and disrespect for the rule of law, all so that he could secretly use his customers' money to expand his own power and influence. The scale of his crimes is measured not just by the amount of money that was stolen, but by the extraordinary harm caused to victims, who in some cases had their life savings wiped out overnight."

The co-founder and ex-CEO of FTX has been in custody since last year, because he violated his bail conditions and engaged in witness tampering, according to the judge.

Will FTX users get their money back?

There is no way to be certain of this, but such an outcome looks highly unlikely, with different parties making vastly different claims about the state of FTX's assets.

Lawyer Andrew Dietderich, who is working with the collapsed crypto exchange, said earlier this year that a strategy was in place to try and repay all those customers and creditors with "legitimate claims," CNBC reported.

Bankman-Fried also said earlier that people would be paid back.

However, Judge Lewis A. Kaplan expressed doubt during the sentencing, noting, "The defendant's assertion that FTX customers and creditors will be paid in full is misleading, it is logically flawed, it is speculative."

How will the sentencing affect the crypto market?

Bankman-Fried's high-profile arrest, his disgraced return to the U.S., and the dramatic court proceedings where his own former colleagues and even a romantic partner testified against him, made headlines worldwide.

His chaotic testimony and uncooperative behaviour stunned even the judge and did not help to turn public opinion in his favour.

The cryptocurrency market itself seemed largely unaffected by the news of the sentencing, as top coins Bitcoin (BTC) and Ether (ETH) did not dramatically spike or fall in the past few days. While FTX's token is still trading, it fell by more than 13% on Friday and was worth less than $2, when compared to its all-time-high of $85.02.

"The FTX bankruptcy proceedings are underway. The FTT token no longer has any use, and may be liquidated by the estate to pay creditors. Please proceed with caution," said a notice on its CoinMarketCap page.

Bitcoin this year marked a new all-time-high in price and crossed the $70,000 threshold, injecting the sector with optimism after around two years of depressed prices and a reputational crisis.

FTX was founded in 2019 and former CEO Sam Bankman-Fried was known for his casual dress sense, lavish lifestyle, and a controversial approach to charity known as 'effective altruism.' Bankman-Fried was also a prolific political donator in the U.S. who gave millions of dollars to individuals from both parties, while FTX was known for its high-profile advertising gimmicks, including commercials with comedian Larry David and American football athlete Tom Brady.

The 25-year-long prison sentence serves as a reminder to crypto entrepreneurs everywhere that U.S. regulators can strike quickly when it comes to the fintech sector.

The greatest loss, however, is usually borne by risk-taking investors.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

From significant milestones to remarkable achievements, many interesting events took place on April 2 across the world. Here is a quiz on some of them

Sindhu Nagaraj

QUESTION 1

He was the head of the Roman Catholic Church from 1978 and was the first non-Italian pope in 455 years and the first from a Slavic country. He died on this day in 2005. Who was he?

QUESTION 2

He was the first recognised emperor to rule in the West after the fall of the Western Roman Empire approximately three centuries earlier. Born on April 2, 748, his impact on the Middle Ages, and his influence on the vast territory he ruled has led him to be called the "Father of Europe". Name him.

QUESTION 3

This Portuguese filmmaker died on this day in 2015, at the age of 106. Known for his artistic films, in March 2008, he was reported to be the oldest active film director in the world. Identify this person.

QUESTION 4

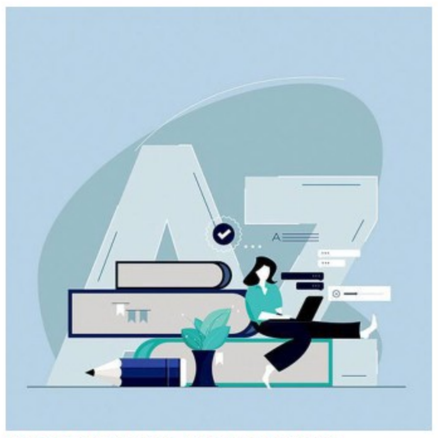
This science fiction film noted for its scientifically accurate depiction of space flight, pioneering special effects, and ambiguous imagery premiered on this day in 1968. It was nominated for four Academy Awards, winning the director the award for his direction of the visual effects. Name the film and director.

QUESTION 5

This German artist was born on this day in 1891. He was a primary pioneer of the Dada movement and Surrealism in Europe. His experimental attitude toward the making of art resulted in his invention of frottage and grattage. Who was he?

Visual Question:
Identify this character from a very popular TV show that premiered for the first time on this day in 1978. Name the show.

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. Which was the first product to get the GI tag? **Ans: Darjeeling tea**
2. It is said that the Mughals were visiting a region in present day Madhya Pradesh when they wanted vermicelli. The local Bhils made them out of gran flour and this savoury was given the tag in 2014. Name this edible item. **Ans: Ratlami Sev**
3. Products like Apatani, Monpa, Adi, Galo, and Tai Khamti received GI tags in January 20204. From which State do they originate? **Ans: Arunachal Pradesh**
4. From which State do the Appemidi and Jardalu come? **Ans: Karnataka and Bihar respectively**
5. Which State cultivates the unique saline-tolerant rice variety known as Pokkali? **Ans: Kerala**
Visual: Which famous GI handicrafted product is the former President Pranab Mukherjee being presented with? **Ans: Aranmula Kannadi**
Early Birds: Vivek Lokhande | Prashant Nain | Rajmohan. V | K.N. Viswanathan | Vijaya Parimi | Jyot Prakash Gulati



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

MR. M. Jhabar Ali, Hindustan Teleprinters, Madras, wants to know which is correct: (a) The board has decided (b) The board have decided.

Both are correct. When we use the singular verb, we think of the members of the board as a group. When we use the plural verb, we think of the board as individuals that make up the group. Other words like 'board' are government, committee, family, gang, jury, mob, team, public, class, crowd, flock, herd, orchestra, panel, offspring, staff. How is the team? It is fine. How are the team? They are enthusiastic. The committee has submitted its report. The committee are yet to arrive at a decision. The audience were delighted. The audience was unimpressed. These collective nouns can be used either with the singular verb or the plural. But you should not mix the singular and plural.

The team is noted for their liveliness' is wrong. Either it is the team is noted for its liveliness,' or 'The team are noted for their liveliness.' The use of the singular verb or the plural depends on whether you look at the collective noun as a unit or as individuals comprising the unit.

Mr. P. S. Mathur, Indira Nagar, Madras, wants to know whether it is correct to use 'Britisher' for a British person. It is used by Americans and not by the British. 'British' is what is generally used in British English.

He is British.

He is a British citizen.

The British introduced cricket wherever they went. 'Briton' is also used in Britain to refer to a British person, mainly in newspaper reports concerning British people.

Ten Britons died in the aircrash in Paris.

'Briton' also refers to the early inhabitants of Britain. Those who live in England are English people. The people of Britain are all British. Britain comprises England, Scotland and Wales. The term was first used in 1604 when James I was proclaimed 'King of Great Britain'. 'Great' was used to distinguish Britain from Brittania Minor, Brittany in France. Those who belong to Scotland are Scots and those who belong to Wales are Welsh. In India, there is a tendency to use 'English' to refer to Scots and the Welsh also. Both resent this. Scotland is a country by itself and so is Wales. England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland comprise the United Kingdom, or the U.K. for short.

There are certain terms where 'Scots' is used as an adjective: Scots law, Scotsman, Scotswoman. But 'Scottish' is more ' frequently used as an adjective: Scottish universities, Scottish newspapers, Scottish English. 'Scotch' is used for products originating in Scotland: Scotch whisky. Scotch wool. Scots call their national drink whisky rather than Scotch whisky or Scotch. The people of Scotland are Scots or the Scottish people and not Scotch. Scots are offended when you call them Scotch. They used to call themselves 'Scotch' during the 18th and 19th centuries, but now they do not like it. The blacks of America are offended when you call them Negroes. The Japanese dislike being called Japs. Even some highly educated people in India call the blacks 'Negroes' and the Japanese 'Japs' out of ignorance.

Published in The Hindu on June 11, 1991

Word of the day

Flout:
treat with contemptuous disregard

Synonyms: defy, disdain, ignore

Usage: *The corrupt politician continued to flout the law.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/floutpro

Internation Phonetic Alphabet: /fláwt/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

‘The growth of a city must come with inclusivity and economic justice for all’

Transgender activist Akkai Padmashali recollects the many facets of the city she grew up in and questions the ethos of an urban development model that further sidelines the marginalised

MY CITY MY TAKE

Akkai Padmashali

I was born and raised in BMK layout which is close to Chamarajpet. Born a male I realised my feminine identity at the age of eight. When I was around nine or ten, I was kicked out by my family for trying to express my identity.

I found shelter near the city market flyover where I spent about 15 days. This was about 25 years ago, and the area saw influx of people from all religions, classes and castes.

People were so prejudiced against non-binary people, and it was difficult for one to even come out of the closet. Stones and eggs used to be hurled at us, making it difficult to simply walk on the streets of Bengaluru.

The hostility was mostly from upper class dominant cis heteronormative men and women.

One thing, however, I realised during this period was the larger amount of acceptance extended to us by the poorest of the poor - coolies, sex workers, fruit and flower sellers, street vendors.

There was discrimination from the working class too, but not to the extent shown by others. The pourakarmikas were kind towards us. A few women’s and Dalit organisations also stood by us.

Nevertheless, the feeling of insecurity was so high that after a few weeks I decided to go back home again. Till I turned 16 I hid my identity.

Cubbon Park, a formative space

When I turned 16, I came out of my home again and joined the Hijra community. Eventually, I got into sex work and begging near Cubbon Park.

It used to be one of the largest spaces available in the city where you could make a living out of sex work. The place was welcoming, and you could be yourself without anyone questioning you. Except for the police and the local authorities, nobody troubled us.

I worked as a sex worker at Cubbon Park from 1999 to 2004. The space played a major role in shaping me as the person that I am today. It’s where I built my dignity from.

The park offered me space for self-reflection. It sowed seeds of thoughts inside me - why am I a sex worker, why am I only a beggar, why I shouldn’t be part of the mainstream society?

Several institutions such as the High Court, the Press club, state government employees’ union office and so on were nearby. When I would eat my *oota* on the footpath in close proximity to these institutions, I would always think why we are not in the court, why are our people not in the employees’ union, why are we not in these mainstream spaces...

Sidelined as a city grows

Cubbon Park, where we all built our lives from and a space which empowered us, is not accessible to us anymore.

‘Cubbon Park, where we all built our lives from and a space which empowered us, is not accessible to us anymore,’ says Padmashali. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

Over time, things changed. Police started unleashing extreme violence towards us and we often became victims of *gundaism*. In Bengaluru’s journey to become a cosmopolitan city, the people of my community were sidelined and pushed out of their spaces as they didn’t fit the global notions of development.

From the sleepy town it used to be, Bengaluru today has become a buzzing metro city. The world’s eyes are on us. But, to cater to the larger world’s notions of development and to pander to capitalistic desires, those at the grassroots levels are being sidelined.

25 years ago, I was a very proud sex worker, today I’m not. The same is the case with others in my community too. Neither Cubbon Park nor the streets of Bengaluru are like how they used to be.

A view of Bengaluru skyline. K. MURALI KUMAR

People of my community are not being let inside the park today. How did these spaces become restricted only for the upper class and their dogs?

Earlier we could go and sit near the steps of Vidhana Soudha, walked in front of the High Court gates; that’s not the case anymore.

Sex workers and sexual minorities continue to be displaced in the name of ongoing development works such as namma metro, widening of roads, huge malls and apartments. Flyovers, the poster child of ‘development,’ have taken over our spaces forcing people out of areas which had become shelters to them for years and pushing them to slums.

Malls have replaced local shops and streets, and transgenders are not allowed inside.

The same is true across Bengaluru, be it Sarjapura, Yelahanka, K.R. Puram, Kengeri or Bengaluru Central.

And if you want to protest these atrocities, you can’t do so in front of the Townhall, Mysore Bank or Jayanagar 4th block, but only at Freedom Park. To think that this is happening in Bengaluru, the hub of activism, is appalling.

Development for who?

This is not the kind of development we should stand for. Development should come with economic justice, respect and acceptance for the region’s local culture.

The living costs in the city have shot up. A mere ₹10 was enough for me to survive a whole day 25 years ago when meals cost Rs 3 and tea was ₹50. The city is no longer affordable for the marginalised.

It is important for all sections of people to have their own safe spaces. The so-called safe spaces for the elite members of the LGBTQIA+ community have always excluded the working-class sexual minorities.

This wasn’t the Bengaluru envisioned by Kempegowda or Kengal Hanumanthaiah. In the name of globalisation and privatisation spaces are being snatched away from people.

With the city alienating them, many people in my community were eventually forced to leave to other cities like Mumbai and Hyderabad. But why should I go? I belong to this city and I’m very much a part of it.

I desire for Bengaluru to be pluralistic and inclusive; I desire that it becomes ‘people’s Bengaluru’. It should be a place where the poor can afford *oota* for ₹10. More initiatives like Indira Canteens and Namma Jatre should come up. It should accommodate all cultures and all sections of people. Inclusivity should be the north star for Bengaluru’s development.

(As told to Shilpa Elizabeth)

Herbalife India partners with IIMB to drive sustainable supply chain practices

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Indian Institute of Management Bangalore. AFP

Herbalife India, a global health and wellness company and community, partnered with the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) to establish a Supply Chain Sustainability Lab.

Launched in 2023, this collaborative effort aims to advance sustainable supply chain practices, dissemination, and advocacy though research and development initiatives.

The Supply Chain Sustainability Lab takes a comprehensive five-pronged approach to sustainability - knowledge creation (tools, research), expert consulting for businesses, and encouraging a collaborative ecosystem through supplier assessment, education, and industry partnerships.

A core focus of the Supply Chain Sustainability Lab’s mission is empowering businesses through the development and implementation of practical tools. These unique tools include the Transportation Emission Measurement Tool (TEMT), which measures emissions across various transportation modes. Companies can leverage this data to make informed decisions that minimize their carbon footprint.

Uday Prakash, Vice President of Operations and Finance, at Herbalife India, said, “By leveraging successful case studies, implementing impactful tools, and collaborating with industry leaders, we’re adapting best practices to suit the Indian context. Together, we’re on a path to a greener future, inspiring others by encouraging a more sustainable supply chain ecosystem.”

Strategic collaborations with like-minded organisations have facilitated knowledge sharing and collaborative research projects, contributing to a deeper understanding of sustainable supply chain practices.

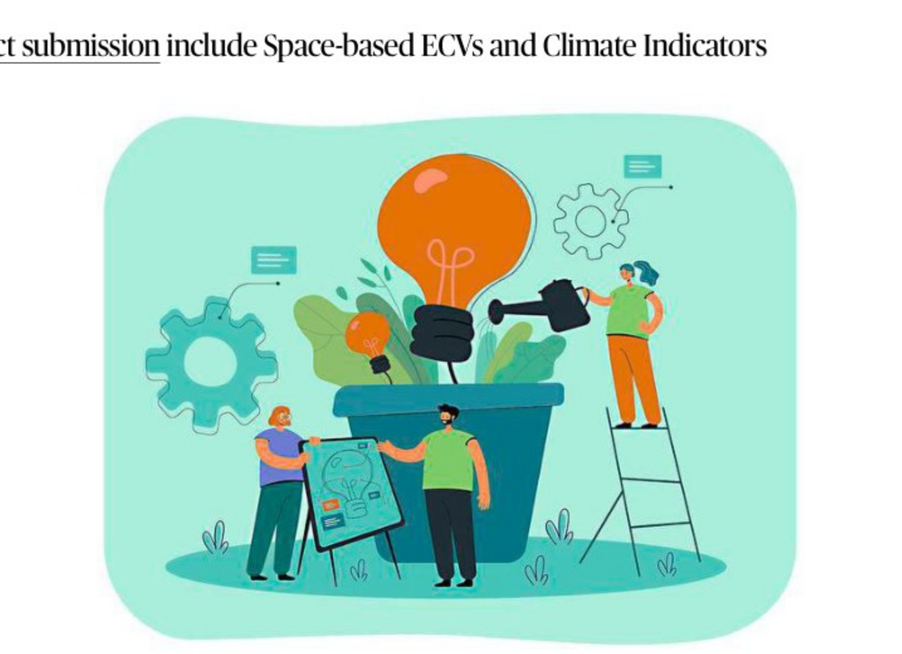
NICES programme invites Indian researchers to join in combating climate change

Potential areas for project submission include Space-based ECVs and Climate Indicators

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The National Information System for Climate and Environment Studies (NICES) programme operated by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Department of Space along with other ministries and institutions under the framework of the National Action Plan on Climate Change is inviting Indian researchers to join in combating climate change.

“The NICES programme now aims to enhance the participation of academia and research institutions in addressing climate change-related challenges through dedicated multidisciplinary scientific investigations. Project proposals are invited from individuals or groups of scientists, academicians, and researchers affiliated with various Indian government organizations, government-recognised institutions, universities, and departments in India. Projects are expected to be completed within 3 years from the date of sanction,” states ISRO.



Since its inception in 2012, NICES has developed and made accessible over 70 geophysical variables related to terrestrial, ocean, and atmospheric conditions.

Project submission

Potential areas for project submission include Space-based ECVs and Climate Indicators, Climate Change Challenges, Weather Extremes, Climate Services, etc. Details such as the description of the NICES program, invitation for project proposals, potential areas for project submission, guidelines for proposal preparation, and schedule are included in the Announcement of Opportunities.

Proposals may be submitted by April 30, 2024.

The NICES web portal contains information on various geophysical datasets and available instrument facilities (nices.nrsc.gov.in) that may be leveraged in these proposals.

An objective of the NICES programme is the generation and dissemination of long-term Essential Climate Variables (ECVs), derived from Indian and other Earth Observation (EO) satellites, which are crucial for characterizing Earth’s climate. Since its inception in 2012, NICES has developed and made accessible over 70 geophysical variables related to terrestrial, ocean, and atmospheric conditions.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 2, 1974

Privilege Issue Disallowed

Bangalore, April 1: A privilege issue sought to be raised by the former Transport Minister, Mr. Aziz Sait, against the leader of the Opposition, Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda and a newspaper of Mandya was disallowed by the Speaker, Mrs. K.S. Nagarathnamma in the Karnataka Assembly today. Mr. Sait alleged that the Leader of the Opposition had said in one of the meetings in Mysore on March 22 that the house of a former Minister had been raided by the CBI and Rs. 4 lakhs, some objectionable documents and plans for construction of a cinema house in Bombay had been seized. This had been reported in a local Kannada daily. The opposition leader’s speech had given room for a lot of speculation that the house raided was Mr. Sait’s.

Irrigation Schemes: Charge Against Centre

Bangalore, April 1: The Leader of the Opposition Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda urged the State Government in the Karnataka Assembly to-day to prevail on the Centre to get special assistance or loan for expediting the major irrigation projects which were progressing at a snail’s pace due to paucity of funds. Participating in the inconclusive consideration of the demands under irrigation Area Development, Water and Power Development and other heads amounting to over Rs. 66 crores, Mr. Gowda accused the Centre of ignoring the States interest in regard to irrigation. He said that there were assurances about assistance for the Upper Krishna Project and at the stage there were even suggestions for the project to be financed by the centre as a national project.

CITYBEATS

All things mango

ONGOING
Rajdhani presents its special mango recipes for the summer. The *thali*, called 'Aamlicious' will include everything with mango as an ingredient – *puranpoli, dal dhokli*, maharaja *dhokla, aam ki launji, aamras puri, bepadi roti* and more.
The *thali* is priced at ₹669 plus taxes.
On at all Rajdhani outlets in Bengaluru for lunch and dinner.

A menu, exclusively Asian

ONGOING
This is an all-new Asian-inspired menu, which will features dishes such as dimsums, prawn chive *har gao*, teriyaki tofu *sui gok* and the mushroom chive *shumai* to name a few.
Besides this there will also be a range of sushis and baos too.
At Levels Pub & Kitchen, JP Nagar. Call 098458 81144 to book your table.

Masterclass on pizza

APRIL 3 TO 7
Pijja, the recently opened pizza destination, announces a masterclass with MasterChef Australia winner, Sashi Cheliah. You will discover insider tips and tricks that will take your culinary skills to the next level and also get to dig into pizzas, pasta, and gelatos worth ₹1000.
At Pijja, HAL 3rd Stage, 6.30pm. Fee is ₹2,500 per person.

Dance like an actor

Onkara, which was screened at the Bengaluru International Film Festival, shows the strong connect between the Mavilan community and theyyam

Shailaja Tripathi

Onkara – a film about Mavilan community – an obscure tribe of Kerala and their love for *theyyam*, a ritualistic dance form of the state, was recently screened at the 15th edition of the Bengaluru International Film Festival (BIFFES) in Bengaluru. The tribe of hunters, gatherers, and herbalists regard *theyyam* as sacred.

Director Unni KR says *theyyam* is significant to the Mavilans. "That's what I have tried to show in the film," says the filmmaker.

Onkara reminds one of the blockbuster Kannada film, *Kantara,* as far the theme is concerned. Both deal with *theyyam*, but the portrayal in *Onkara* is subtle.

Onkara is reportedly the first film in Markodi, a dialect of the Tulu language, which does not have a script.

The film follows the life of Karumban, a *theyyam* artiste and the son of Chinkam, the village head.

Chinkam in Markodi means lion, and Chinkam leads the Mavilan community, akin to the king of the jungle. Karumban wants to follow in the footsteps of his father and become the next Chinkam. He and his family lead a life of poverty. Karumban's wife suggests that he should take up farming but he is consumed by his passion for *theyyam*. His elder daughter, Manikyam, falls in love with a bangle seller and elopes. The villagers turn against Karumban and question his right to become the next Chinkam. Meanwhile, Manikyam returns to the forest after being sexually assaulted. Chinkam orders the villagers to severe ties with Manikyam.

The film is peppered with *theyyam* performances by Karumban, essayed by Sudheer Karamana, making it a visual feast.

Theyyam is derived from the word *daivam* or god. The dance form was never meant to entertain but to invoke the deity and seek blessings for prosperity.

That is how *theyyam* has come to be the dance of gods. It is believed that during the performance, the artiste transcends their body and connects with the divine.

With the face painted in bright colours and dramatic eye-make up, donning an elaborate costume, a huge bamboo headgear and unique jewellery, the male dancer performs to the beats of musical instruments such as *chenda* (percussion), *kuzhal* (double reed wind instrument), *elathalam* (cymbals). In an open-air setting, he then enacts the stories of Kari Chamundi (goddess of disease), Vishnumoorthi (a representation of Vishnu), Bhagavathi, Raktha Chamundi and other gods.

A visual feast Stills from *Onkara*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The audience is immersed in *bhakti rasa* while watching the dancer perform with energy and vigour. The costume, performance, open-air setting in the night and lighting come together to make it an enchanting experience.

There are more than 400 styles of *theyyam*. "This tribe's *theyyam* is different and difficult as well. Our lead actor, Sudheer, trained in it for six months," says Unni.

The film's catalogue gives a holistic description of the role *theyyam* practitioners play in the Mavilan community. It says: "*Theyyam* artistes in the community create wonders and are deemed to possess all-encompassing knowledge. They leave behind their homes and loved ones to take up residence in the jungle and perform miracles. Their abode, known as *Pathee* is sought out by people who want guidance in life. Their visions of the future set a rhythm to Mavilan life."

Apart from *theyyam*, the film goes on to spotlight other folk songs and dance forms like *Mangalamkali* (wedding dance ritual) and *Eruthkali* of the Mavilan tribe. The film documents their musical instruments as well such as *thudi* and bamboo drums.

While the film was shot in 30 days in forests, the research by director Unni KR and Rajesh Thillenkeri, who has written the story, screenplay and dialogue, took three years. "The tribals have a difficult life but they don't complain. They want to live like free birds. *Onkara* is an effort to document the Mavilans culture," says Unni.

FILM REVIEW

Vivek MV

Done and dusted A still from *Yuva*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Foiled by formula

Yuva marks the debut of Yuva Rajkumar, and the film industry has a template for launching heroes. Make him an angry young man who does not miss a chance to deliver punch dialogues and transform him into someone who cares for his family, and there you go! A star is born... or that's what the filmmakers believe.

For all the hype of the next actor from the revered Dr Rajkumar family, Santhosh Ananndram's *Yuva* disappoints as it is utterly formulaic. The film strongly resembles *Mr. and Mrs. Ramachari,* Santhosh's debut starring Yash. That film showcased a flawed hero with anger issues getting into trouble with regular fights in college. The protagonist also had a tumultuous relationship with his father, which he eventually resolves in an emotional episode.

The fact that *Yuva* also has a similar kind of hero tells the sorry tale of Santhosh's decline as a filmmaker. Repeating your pet theme is alright, as long as you have newer ways of dealing with it. But Santhosh plays it safe and offers a hero who is your traditional invincible man, bound to win eventually despite all the hurdles thrown at him.

Yuva begins with a gang war between local students and hostel students in a reputed college in Mangaluru. Yuva (Yuva Rajkumar) represents the hostel students, and he is soon banned as things go out of control in the college. The attempt to present Yuva Rajkumar as a 'mass' hero is evident, but the result is far from organic. The gang war, stretched more than required, is uninteresting, and the debutant actor's monotonous dialogue delivery adds salt to the wound.

In the second half, it is time for Yuva to become an ideal man and a pillar of strength for his family when his father, unable to repay huge debts, goes missing. And knowing Santhosh, it is not tough to predict how the film progresses from that point. *Yuva* becomes a melodramatic drama reflecting the struggles of the middle-class community. While the director's intentions are well-meaning, it would have been better if the director had portrayed a sensible and self-respecting middle-class family instead of milking the age-old trope of an emotional family carrying big dreams.

However, it is heartening that the women in a commercial Kannada film are sensibly written. Sapthami Gowda, Yuva's girlfriend, is a fearless and practical woman who advises her lover to control his hasty decisions. Veteran Sudharani, playing Yuva's mother, warns her husband about unnecessarily spending lavishly for their daughter's marriage. Hita Chandrashekar essays the role of Yuva's sister, and is impressive as someone who is quietly resolute for her family's cause. However, none of these female characters are fleshed out completely, as the film is focused mainly on amplifying Yuva's character.

The unabashedly hero-centric film lacks memorable characters and terrifying antagonists. With the entire spotlight on him, Yuva Rajkumar is not completely off target as he excels in action sequences. He is also convincing as a ruthless wrestler, offering a glimpse of his potential as an action hero. With better expressions and body language, the actor can ace the role of a 'mass' hero in commercial cinema. As for *Yuva,* he is let down by a story too routine for its own good.

Yuva is currently running in theatres.

Yuva (Kannada)
Director: Santhosh Ananddram
Cast: Yuva Rajkumar, Achyuth Kumar, Sapthami Gowda, Sudharani
Runtime: 153 minutes
Storyline: A rebellious youngster known for gang wars in his college is forced to be responsible and mend his attitude when his family gets into trouble

Of the senses and those sensibilities

Changing constants Some of the art on display at the exhibition. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ruth Dhanaraj

What are you feeling right now, as you read this – curious, nonchalant, bored, interested? Or is there something else niggling at the back of your mind? Our state of mind is constantly governed by our emotions even if we do manage to master our expressions.

The Pollen Waits on its Tiptoe, an art exhibition themed around the nine emotions or *Navarasas*, has been curated by Bengaluru-based Manasa Raj.

Manasa says the idea for this show was a long time in the making.

"During the pandemic, I noticed how the same situation was eliciting different reactions from different people – some were anxious, others relieved, while few saw it as an opportunity to challenge themselves. It was a time when everyone was undergoing emotional upheaval and I began to wonder about putting together a show around emotions."

"Then, when the concept of the *Navarasas* struck me, I thought it would be an interesting way to depict feelings," she says, adding it all came together while reading a translated work of Kannada poems by Da Ra Bendre where he dwells on the *rasas* (emotion) and *rasika* (viewer). "It resonated with the way I had been ideating this concept," says Manasa.

"*The Pollen Waits on its Tiptoe* is the title of Da Ra's work," says Manasa about the title of the exhibition. "Besides, I find pollen to be an apt metaphor for human emotions – full of life and yet, directionless for the most part. It floats by on a journey of purpose."

In the works on display, " A *rasa* is explained as the emotional state of mind, the purity of emotion, to be shared with the *rasika* or viewer, partaking in the artist's expression and interpretation and sharing the moment in a particular state of mind," she says.

According to the *Natyashastra,* the nine emotions are *adbutha* (surprise), *bhayanaka* (fear), *bibhatsya* (disgust), *hasya* (humour), *karuna* (compassion), *raudra* (anger), *shantha* (peace), *shringara* (love) and *veera* (courage).

The show features the works of of 21 artists; while most are from Karnataka, a few from Delhi, Mumbai and Lucknow, are also featured.

Manasa says after going through their work, she approached artists to create art on specific *rasas*. While the chosen emotion resonated with some artists, a few felt their frame of mind was more inclined to another feeling and they worked on that, says Manasa, adding that the interaction opened avenues of dialogue between them.

"Artists are emotional beings who express themselves through their work. Though the theme was a *rasa*, it is a fact that we are not only capable of experiencing multiple emotions at the same time, but they are constantly changing."

Manasa has sectioned the exhibition into nine parts with each room showcasing one of the emotions. Since the rooms are named, viewers are invited to introspect if each work of art reflects their own perception of that emotion.

The media used are as diverse as the artists and the emotions they have depicted, and include painting, sculpture, photography, print, fabric, installations and mixed media art.

The Pollen Waits on its Tiptoe will be on display at 7 Galleries, Chitrakala Parishat till April 8.

Karnataka HC warns publishers of law books

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

It is high time those who print and publish statutes and statutory instruments are extra cautious, or else, they run the risk of being hauled up for contempt of court, perjury, and such offences for printing books with wrong provisions of the laws, the High Court of Karnataka has cautioned the publishers.

In addition, the Court said that the publishers would also run the risk of being blacklisted from public tenders for the supply of books of their publication for publishing the law books with mistakes.

"It goes without saying that if for the 'mistake of law', none should suffer, none should suffer for the 'mistake of law publisher' too," observed a Division Bench comprising Chief Justice N.V. Anjaria and Justice Krishna S. Dixit.

The Bench made these observations in its order on a writ appeal, filed by Fr. Valerian Fernandes of Naravi in Belthangadi taluk of Dakshina Kannada district, on an issue related to land grant after the Bench noticed an error in a law book, titled Karnataka Land Grant Rules, 1969, KLJ Publications, 2019, 5th Edition, published by KLJ Publications, Bengaluru.

A government advocate, citing the said book, quoted a provision of the rule stating that a provision of the rule has been 'substituted' by way of amendment of the Karnataka Land Grant Rules. The government advocate, citing the amended rule printed, had also contended that as per the amended rule, there is a requirement of payment of certain percentage of 'market value' by the litigant-claimant of the land in relation to a granted land as the rule was given effect retrospectively.

SC refers Kerala govt.'s suit on net borrowing cap to five-judge Bench

The court says Centre has given Kerala 'substantial relief' of ₹13,608 crore to tide over immediate financial crisis; in its suit, Kerala had said its demands for help is well within the framework drawn by the Constitution and Finance Commission

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday referred to a Constitution Bench the question raised by Kerala whether a State had an "enforceable right" to raise its borrowing limits from the Union government and other sources. The reference came on the basis of an original suit filed by Kerala accusing the Centre of arbitrarily restraining its borrowing limits, due to which the State was skirting the brink of a financial emergency, unable to pay salaries, pensions and fulfil its other essential financial commitments.

The Bench of Justices Surya Kant and K.V. Viswanathan observed that the Centre had already allowed a "substantial relief" of ₹13,608 crore to the State for it to tide over the immediate crisis. The court noted that the "balance of convenience" lay in favour of the Centre for now as it had already given the additional amount to the State.

The court said the order was *ad interim* in nature and the larger questions of law raised in the suit would be examined by the five-judge Bench, which the Chief Justice of India would constitute later on.

'Vacuum in law'

The Division Bench noted that there was a vacuum in law concerning Article 293 of the Constitution, which deals with the financial borrowings by States.

> The order was *ad interim* in nature and the questions of law raised in the suit would be examined by five-judge Bench which should interpret clause (3) of Article 293
> **SUPREME COURT**

Kerala had approached the top court arguing that the Centre's shackles on the State's borrowing powers was an attack on federalism and a catalyst to bring about a breakdown of the constitutional machinery in the State. Kerala had argued that the borrowing limits ought to be fixed by the States

The court said the five-judge Bench should specifically focus and interpret clause (3) of Article 293 which said a "State may not without the consent of the government of India raise any loan if there is still outstanding any part of a loan which has been made to the State by the government of India or by its predecessor government, or in respect of which a guarantee has been given by the government of India or by its predecessor government".

In its interim order, the two-judge Bench said the arguments of the Union were whether deductions were permissible in a successive year when there was an over-utilisation of borrowing limits, even over-borrowing, by a State in the previous year.

In the suit, Kerala had said its demands for financial leeway and help was well within the framework drawn by the Constitution and the Finance Commission.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal had argued that the Centre had "put a spin" on the demands made by the State, portraying it as a "delinquent" which splurged its funds.

Additional Solicitor-General N. Venkataraman, for the Union, had argued that the State had a long history of fiscal deficit.

The Centre had accused Kerala of being "one of the most financially unhealthy States". A note submitted by the Attorney-General in the Supreme Court had said the "fiscal edifice of Kerala has been diagnosed with several cracks". The Centre had said the poor financial indicators of Kerala pointed to a "lack of proper management of its public finances".

A positive step that will benefit other States also: Kerala

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal on Monday described as "positive" the Supreme Court decision to refer the State government's suit on its borrowing limit to the Constitution Bench.

Mr. Balagopal, reacting to the Court decision, portrayed it as a vindication of the State's stand. "The important point here is that the court has held that the suit filed by Kerala is serious enough to be examined by the Constitutional Bench," Mr. Balagopal said, speaking to reporters in Kollam.

The court decision is an important event in Centre-State relations, especially in matters pertaining to federalism and finances, Mr. Balagopal said. It shows that there is indeed substance in the arguments made by the State government regarding federalism and fiscal matters.

"It is equally important that the court has referred to the Constitutional Bench a suit which the Centre wanted summarily rejected when it was filed," he said.

On the court declining the State's plea for ₹10,000 crore as interim relief, Mr. Balagopal said it could be because the "pressing needs" for the month of March have been met. The Finance Minister said that the State is optimistic about its prospects before the Constitutional Bench. "This is the first time in the history of Kerala and India that a subject of this nature is going to come up before the Constitution Bench," he said.

> It is equally important that the Supreme Court has referred to the Constitutional Bench a suit which the Centre wanted summarily rejected
> **K.N. BALAGOPAL**
> Finance Minister

"We are hoping that it would prove helpful to other States as well. In fact, we are hoping that it would be helpful to the country itself. Because, India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union 'of' States. Not Union 'and' States. Only if there are States there is the Union," he said.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday

TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy rainfall/snowfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya. Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim and Sub-Himalayan West Bengal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	1	35.4	25.7	Kozhikode	—	37.5	27.9
Ahmedabad	—	37.6	22.8	Kurnool	—	42.2	27.0
Aizawl	18	32.0	16.4	Lucknow	—	36.4	20.8
Allahabad	—	38.6	20.4	Madurai	—	39.1	27.1
Bengaluru	—	35.1	23.4	Mangaluru	—	34.4	27.2
Bhopal	—	37.5	20.8	Mumbai	—	34.2	24.5
Bhubaneswar	—	39.4	24.5	Mysuru	—	36.6	18.1
Chandigarh	—	29.2	17.0	New Delhi	—	31.6	18.4
Chennai	—	35.0	27.7	Patna	—	36.9	20.8
Coimbatore	—	38.4	24.5	Port Blair	—	33.5	25.2
Dehradun	—	28.8	15.4	Puducherry	—	35.4	27.4
Gangtok	18	22.1	13.3	Pune	—	39.9	23.7
Goa	—	33.6	26.2	Raipur	—	39.5	26.4
Guwahati	60	32.9	18.8	Ranchi	3	35.4	20.8
Hubballi	—	39.0	22.0	Shillong	13	24.2	13.0
Hyderabad	—	39.6	25.2	Shimla	1	21.0	12.4
Imphal	11	28.7	15.1	Srinagar	—	20.5	6.4
Jaipur	—	34.5	22.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.4	26.5
Kochi	—	32.8	28.0	Tiruchi	—	39.3	27.0
Kohima	7	23.0	11.8	Vijayawada	—	39.6	25.2
Kolkata	—	38.5	27.4	Visakhapatnam	—	31.6	27.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	4	24	.16	269	195	
Bengaluru	.10	.17	.23	105	129	
Chennai	.11	.12	.85	31	31	
Delhi	.24	.86	.61	284	220	
Hyderabad	.13	.36	.24	58	93	
Kolkata	.17	.21	.27	105	94	
Lucknow	8	.48	.22	93	183	
Mumbai	.60	.45	.29	88	161	
Pune	.88	109	117	37	42	
Visakhapatnam	.13	.41	.29	46	88	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Barbil, Odisha recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 268 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 14

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Two new insulated aerial work platform vehicles

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The KPTCL has procured insulated aerial work platform vehicles from Brazil to provide uninterrupted power supply to consumers.

Three such vehicles are being used in Bengaluru, Chitradurga and Hubballi while two more have been procured for Mysuru and Kalaburagi regions.

'Diviseema Gandhi' joins JSP in A.P.

The Hindu Bureau
PITHAPURAM

Mandali Buddha Prasad, the former Deputy Speaker of the A.P. Assembly, joined the Jana Sena Party in Kakinada district on Monday. JSP president K. Pawan Kalyan welcomed him into his party. Mr. Prasad is the son of Gandhian Mandali Venkata Krishna Rao, popular as 'Diviseema Gandhi'.

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Notice Inviting Offers

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MAHADEVAPURA

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Last date: 18.04.2024 **Sd/- ZONAL MANAGER**

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that our client **Sri.Sathiskumar K S/o.Sri. Kokilanandan** is intending to purchase the schedule property mentioned hereunder from **Sri. K.A.Raghavendra and Others** ; any person/s, Bank, Financial Institutions etc objecting for the proposed purchase or are having any right, title, interest or any type of claim over the scheduled property is hereby called upon to file their objections/claims what so ever along with documentary proof on or before **7 days** from the date of publication of this notice with the under mentioned advocate failing which; our client shall proceed and complete the sale transaction with the above stated person.

PROPERTY SCHEDULE:

All the piece and parcel of immovable property being **Southern Portion of Residential Property bearing Site No. 22** formed out of **Old Property No. 41/1, New Property No. 41/14, BBMP sl. No. 844, BBMP Khata No. DA/W25/BPR/4279/23-24** situated at 2nd Cross, 2nd Phase, Anjinappa Layout, Kothanur, K.R Puram Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District now comes under the Administrative Jurisdiction of Bruhath Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Ward No. 25 **Measuring East To West: on the Northern Side 40.5 Feet & on the Southern Side 40 Feet and North To South: 30 Feet in all Measuring 1207.5 Square Feet** and Bounded by:
East by : 30 Feet Road, West By : Site No.21 formed out of Property No.39/5, North By : Remaining Portion in Site No.22, South By : Site No.23 formed out of Property No.41/15

C.K.V.K. LAW ASSOCIATES
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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, HARKIRANKAUR MANJITSINGH SAINI, w/o Manjit Singh Saini, r/o I 1308, Brigade Metropolis, Mahadevapura, Bengaluru – 560048, have changed my name from Harkirankaur Manjitsingh Sardar to Harkirankaur Manjitsingh Saini vide affidavit dated 30/03/2024 sworn before notary J. Anand Kumar Bangalore.

I, ISMAIEL Ahmed Baig, R/o No.10, Noble Street, Rashad Nagar, Nagawara, Bangalore-560045 have changed my name to Ismail Ahmed Baig vide affidavit dt:26.03.2024 sworn before Notary Sumithra.N, B'lore

I, MOHAMED Ausif G, R/o No 10-13/A Cross, 5th BLK, Umar Nagar, Behind Farida Shoe Factory, Opp Kauser Masjid, Govindpur, Arabic College, Bangalore-560045 have changed my name to Mohammed Ausif G vide affidavit dt: 26.03.2024 sworn before Notary Sumithra.N, B'lore

I, SHAHEEN, R/o No 10-13/A Cross, 5th BLK, Umar Nagar, Behind Farida Shoe Factory, Opp Kauser Masjid, Govindpur, Arabic College, Bangalore-560045 have changed my name to Shaheen Taj, vide affidavit dt: 23.03.2024 sworn before Notary Sumithra.N, B'lore

I, MANOJ Kumar B. V. S/o. Late Shri C. A. Vasudeva Rao, aged about 55 years, R/at No. 4, (5/1) , Ambabhavani Nilaya, Kathri Guppa Main Road, Banashankari 3rd Stage, Bangalore - 560 085, I have changed my minor daughter Laksha (Old name) name as Laksha Aishwaryaa Ambekar ., (New Name) vide affidavit dated 28.03.2024 sworn before Advocate & Notary S. Nagaraja, Bangalore.

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, JAIN Sapna Pukhraj Savita, R/a No.168, 5th A Crs(6th Crs), 10th Main, BSK 1st Stg, Bangalore-560050 have changed my name to Sapna Pukhraj Jain vide affidavit dt: 29.03.2024 sworn before Notary K.V.Mani, B'luru

I, SHIVANAND Veerappa Diggi, S/o Veerappa Diggi, R/a No.403, Krishna Kruthi C R Pride, Sanjaya Nagar Main Road, RMV 2nd Stage, Nagashettyhalli, Bangalore-560094 have changed my name to Shivanand Diggi vide affidavit dt:28.03.2024 sworn before Notary Uday Kumar.K, B'luru

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PUBLIC NOTICE

My clients have agreed to purchase Residential Immovable Property bearing BBMP Municipal New No.49/17, (old BDA Site No.49), situated at 7th B Main Road, 4th Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru-560 011, from Smt. **S. KIRANA VASANTH,** Daughter of Sri. H.R. Aswathanarayan, Wife of Mr. S.G. Vasanth Kumar, Residing at BBMP Door No. 34/1, Opposite to 1st Cross, 7th Main Road, Jayanagar 2nd Block, Bengaluru-560 011.

Any person/s who have any valid claim, title, demand or interest over the said property or any objections to the purchase of the said property by my clients may file his/her objection/s in writing, along with copies of the supporting documents duly attested, with the undersigned within TEN DAYS from this day. Failing which, it will be deemed that no other person/s, has any claim, demand, interest or title in the said property by way of previous sale or agreement to sell or charge or lien, otherwise or objections to the purchase of the said property by my clients and my clients will complete the sale as if there is no such claim.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Residential Immovable Property bearing BBMP Municipal New No.49/17, (old BDA Site No.49), situated at 7th B Main Road, 4th Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore 560 011, having P.I.D. No. 60-159-17, Coming under BBMP Pattabhiramnagar New Ward No. 168, consist of Land measuring East to West 56 feet and North to South 40 feet, totaling 2240 Square feet, having old RCC Building thereon Ground floor and First floor, in total measuring 2200 Square feet, with victrified tiles flooring, teak wood doors and windows, with all the Civic amenities such as Electricity, Water and Sewerage connections, bounded on:

East by : BDA Site No.55, West by : **7th B Main Road,** North by : BDA Site No.48 and South by : BDA Site No.50.

S.C. THILOKCHAND, DEEPAK T JAIN,
Advocate
Sakalajee Market, Avenue Road,
Bengaluru-560 002.
Phone No.080-2210751 Mob : 98452 55592

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

IN MEMORIAM

IN FOND MEMORY OF
Late D. ANNALAKSHMI AMMAL
(Wife of Late V.S.K.D. NADAR)

THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY
02.04.2024
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Family Members
D.MANOHARA RAJAN
& Family Members
D.GUNASEELA RAJAN
& Family Members

BUSINESS CONNECT

A Business Initiative

Fortune favours the winners of GRT's Jewellery shopping festival

GRT Jewellers, since its inception in 1964, has established itself as a beacon of trust, purity, auspiciousness, and exquisite craftsmanship in the realm of jewellery. With meticulously curated collections for every occasion, each piece from GRT stands as a testament to precision and technique, blending tradition with contemporary flair across gold, diamonds, platinum, silver, and gemstones. During the festival season, GRT Jewellers had launched the "Shop and Win Festival" across its showrooms from December 22, 2023 to January 31, 2024, catering to customers in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka. This exciting festival offered customers the opportunity to win spectacular prizes like XUVs, Diamond Necklaces, Bikes, Gold and Silver coins worth more than Rs. 5 Crores, with every purchase of Rs 5,000 and above. The results of the Shop N Win festival added more smiles to celebrations as 1062 lucky customers took home; 24 customers got -Mahindra XUV 300s, 47 customers got -Diamond necklace sets worth Rs. 2 lakhs each, 47 customers got-TVS Jupiter 125cc, 236 customers got - 10 gm gold coins each, and 708 customers got- 100 gm silver coins each. Following the announcement, Mr. G.R. 'Anand' Ananthapadmanaban, MD, GRT Jewellers, expressed, " We are pleased to have contributed to the grand festivities. The smiles on our customers' faces are the true measures of our success, and we are committed to bringing more joyous moments like this in the future." Mr. G. R. Radhakrishnan, MD, GRT Jewellers, added, " Our goal was to create lasting memories during the festive season. The enthusiastic response to the Shop and Win festival inspires us to continue creating unique and rewarding experiences, ensuring that GRT remains synonymous with celebration and delight in the hearts of our patrons.

New Beginning, New Home, New Memories – benefits at Punjab National Bank (PNB) Home Loan

Don't dream about owning a home. Make it happen with PNB! To metamorph dreams into reality, opt for a home loan from Punjab National Bank, India's second largest public sector bank. PNB offers ROI on HL. ZERO legal and valuation charges in takeover of housing loan. ZERO processing/ upfront fees and documentation charges; under festival bonanza. Majority of the Housing Projects of all reputed builders in Bangalore has been approved by PNB, hence individual housing loan processing Turn Around Time (TAT) is the lowest. PNB MAX saver scheme offers home loan borrowers especially high income group who prefer to park their excess funds in loan account for interest benefit. Young salaried class borrowers such as IT professionals, PSBs/PSU/ Govt. will be offered 1.25 times the loan amount calculated as per the regular home loan eligibility. Composite loan for residential plot and construction of a house thereon, making your journey to your dream home smooth and hassle free. Fixed Interest Rate Options under for women Borrowers and Borrowers under PNB PRIDE for Central/ State Government Employees/ Defence personnel/ Para military Forces/ Pensioners of Central & State Government & Employees of PSUs. Pre-Qualified Credit Card for Housing loan borrowers of loan amount of 20 lacs and above and loan account older than 3 years. Insta Vehicle Scheme to provide Car Loan at concessional Rate of Interest and attractive / lucrative Terms and conditions to Housing Loan Borrowers both existing and new. PNB offers group insurance cover, one-time credit life insurance cover premium, available to the Home Loan borrower(s) to effectively safeguard borrower's family from the burden of repaying the loan outstanding against the exigencies due to death of the borrowers during the tenor of loan. Top up facility up to 1 Cr available on HL accounts. Customers can also avail Digi Home Loan available 24*7 and hassle free. Financing of Solar Power Systems is also covered in it. So walk in to your nearest Punjab National Bank Branch to avail the above benefits.

The Kamakshi Assemblage: A Divine Symphony of Craftsmanship and Heritage - 155 Year C. Krishniah Chetty Group Of Jewellers

C Krishniah Chetty Group of Jewellers, with its rich legacy of creating exquisite jewellery, introduces the Kamakshi Assemblage, a collection that transcends the ordinary to celebrate the profound artistic and architectural heritage of India. Art, an expression of thoughts and emotions, and architecture, the science of designing and building, come together in this unique collection inspired by the sacred city of Kanchipuram. India'a architectural grandeur, manifested in Nagara, Vesara, and Dravida styles, serves as a canvas for the Kamakshi Assemblage. The Kamakshi Temple, a jewel in Kanchipuram's crown, showcases an exquisite blend of Dravidian and Vijayanagar architectural styles, embodying the divine and the majestic. The Kamakshi Assemblage by CKC is more than a collection; it's a journey through the rich tapestry of Indian culture, art, and spirituality. It invites wearers and onlookers alike to explore the depths of India's architectural and divine heritage, encapsulated in the form of exquisite jewellery. Through this assemblage, the legacy of Kanchipuram's divine beauty and craftsmanship continues to shine, transcending borders and generations.

Cultivating Dreams with Moggs Estate

Mogg Estates, a Bengaluru-based managed farmland company, is turning dream into a reality for the urban dwellers. They're not just selling land, they're cultivating a way for city folks to reconnect with nature, to own a piece of the earth and to experience the joy of nurturing life, all without the backbreaking work. Moggs Estate was founded in 2020 by Amogh Keegadi who has a deep understanding of finance and agriculture. Keegadi with a strong agricultural background and roots in Thirthahalli, Shimoga, noticed a rising trend, friends visiting from the city yearned for a piece farmland but had no knowledge about farming. That is where the idea stemmed from. The company acquires land, develop it for agricultural purposes, sell it off in smaller plots, and then offer ongoing management services. They will prep the soil, sow the seeds and even harvest. Through this concept the company is giving a chance to the city dwellers to create a space to breathe, to escape the city's chaos and witness the magic of nature firsthand. They prioritise organic practices, promoting a healthier environment and allowing the landowners to contribute to a more sustainable future. Their vision extends beyond simply selling land. They see the potential for a thriving agrotourism industry. This innovative approach could create a win-win situation for both parties - city dwellers seeking a rural escape and farmers eager to share their land and knowledge. Today, they manage over 300 acres of farmland across Kanakapura, Maddur, Shimoga, Sakleshpura, Chikmaglur and Hassan. With over 100 satisfied customers, Moggs is carving a unique niche in the market. Their dedication to sustainable practices, combined with their commitment to supporting both landowners and farmers, positions them as a leader in the burgeoning realm of managed farmlands and agrotourism ventures. https://moggs.in/

No man's land

Those in power should not rake up issues that affect ties with neighbours

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, by raking up the contentious matter of Katchatheevu, has set an unhealthy trend of politicising an issue for electoral gains, and one that has bearing on ties with Sri Lanka. Mr. Modi, on March 31 on X, stated that "new facts reveal how Congress callously gave away #Katchatheevu". Even though the State BJP, like other parties in Tamil Nadu, has been talking about the island's retrieval, the situation gets complicated when its national leadership too lends its voice. As with the Congress-led UPA government, the BJP-led NDA regime too has seen the islet as a part of Sri Lanka. In 2022, the External Affairs Ministry (MEA) informed the Rajya Sabha that "Katchatheevu lies on the Sri Lankan side of the India-Sri Lanka International Maritime Boundary Line [IMBL]". In 2013, the UPA regime told the Supreme Court that the question of retrieval did not arise as no territory belonging to India was ceded to Sri Lanka. It contended that the islet was a matter of dispute between British India and Ceylon and that there was no agreed boundary, a matter settled through the 1974 and 1976 agreements, leading to the IMBL. A little after Mr. Modi became Prime Minister, an MEA affidavit in the Madras High Court stated that sovereignty over Katchatheevu "is a settled matter". But the present government has also been telling Parliament that the matter relating to the islet is sub judice as it was before the Supreme Court.

The crux of the row now is whether the Congress, under Jawaharlal Nehru or Indira Gandhi, had "callously" handled the matter. Documents from an RTI query by BJP State president K. Annamalai reveal that the Indian leadership, before the agreements of 1974 and 1976, had recognised that it did not have a strong case over the territory, even though the area was part of the zamindari of the Raja of Ramanathapuram since 1803. A report in *The Hindu* (March 1972) says the annual church festival began over "90 years ago". But, what must have troubled the Indian authorities, going by the minutes of a meeting in Chennai in 1974 between Foreign Secretary Kewal Singh and Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, were historical facts aiding Sri Lanka. These include the reference by an Indian survey team in 1874-76 to Kathatheevu being a part of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka's assertion of sovereignty since 1921 when talks began to demarcate the fishery line in the Palk Bay, and the inability of the Madras Presidency to establish the islet's original title. Besides, Sri Lanka had been exercising jurisdiction over the territory since the mid-1920s without protest by India. Nehru's observation on "giving up our claim" or constitutional expert M.C. Setavald's favourable opinion is thus cited by critics of the Congress and the DMK, but the RTI documents show that the decision had sound basis. It is understandable if political leaders in Tamil Nadu raise the demand of Katchatheevu's retrieval every now and then, but it would be extremely disturbing if the Prime Minister too joins the bandwagon.

Solar surge

India's solar industry must grow without compromising on quality

The new financial year has begun with the government finally bringing into effect a policy that will discourage solar power project developers from relying on imported panels. The Approved Models and Manufacturers of Solar Photovoltaic Modules (Requirement for Compulsory Registration) Order, 2019, requires module makers to submit to an inspection of their manufacturing facilities by the National Institute of Solar Energy. Being on the list as an 'approved' manufacturing facility certifies a company as legitimately manufacturing solar panels within its premises and not importing modules. The major advantage is eligibility to compete for the government's tenders for its flagship solar energy programmes. This includes the recently announced PM solar rooftop scheme.

The creation of such a list was also aimed at restricting imports from China, which controls nearly 80% of the global supply, amid the downturn in diplomatic relations. India has ambitious plans of sourcing about 500 GW, nearly half its requirement of electricity, from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. This would mean at least 280 GW from solar power by that year or at least 40 GW of solar capacity being annually added until 2030. In the last five years, this has barely crossed 13 GW though the government has claimed that the COVID-19 pandemic affected this trajectory and the country was on track to add between 25 GW-40 GW annually. The difficulty is that meeting the targets requires many more panels and component cells than India's domestic industry can supply. In recent years, a significant fraction of India's solar installations has been met by imports. This affects the interests of domestic panel manufacturers who have to pay the government to be certified while at the same time losing out on orders to the cheaper Chinese panels. To meet demand, the Centre, which has kept postponing the implementation of the approved list, has now decreed that this will take effect from April 1. The yardstick of success is when India meets its 2030 commitment while also ensuring that solar power is affordable to most Indians. This means that domestic manufacturers should be subject to stringent quality checks and not be allowed to compromise on cost and quality merely on nationalistic grounds. While the Indian solar industry must grow and gain a reputation for being a high quality exporter, it should not forget that this is a road with no easy shortcuts.

The PMLA — a law that has lost its way

P.D.T. Achary

is former Secretary General, Lok Sabha

The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 was enacted with a distinct objective. The humongous volume of black money generated through international drug trafficking posed a grave threat to the economy of many countries. There was widespread realisation that the black money generated through the flourishing drug trade and integrated into the legitimate economy was likely to destabilise the world economy and endanger the integrity and sovereignty of nations.

The background to the law is important

The United Nations took serious note of this, and in 1988, held the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. All countries were urged to take urgent steps to prevent the laundering of the proceeds of drug crimes and other connected activities. Subsequent to this, seven major industrial nations held a summit in Paris (July 1989) and established the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to examine the problem of money laundering and recommend measures to tackle this menace. Thereafter, in 1990, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution, namely, the Political Declaration and Global Programme of Action which called upon all member-countries to enact suitable pieces of legislation to effectively prevent the laundering of drug money.

In pursuance of this resolution of the UN General Assembly, the Government of India used the recommendations of the FATF to formulate a legislation to prevent drug money laundering. As drug trafficking is a trans-border operation, the UN held a special session on June 10, 1998 on the theme 'Countering World Drug Problem Together' and made another declaration on the urgent need to combat money laundering. Accordingly, the Indian Parliament enacted the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in 2002. But it was brought into force in 2005.

This narration of the history of this law is necessary in order to emphasise the original objective and the circumstances which lead to the enactment. As is clear from the history, the main focus of the law is on combating the laundering of drug money. Accordingly, the Act of 2002 contained a few offences listed in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985. The UN resolutions, and the FATF recommendations are all focused on the prevention of money from the laundering of drugs. However, the PMLA of India acquired a different character through amendments from time to time.

The law on money laundering revolves around the "crime proceeds" which are laundered. Not only the persons involved directly in the crime and the generation of the crime proceeds but also persons who have nothing to do with the crime but who have some involvement at a later stage in the laundering process are also guilty under this law.

> The most serious aspect of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) is the inclusion of offences which have nothing to do with the original motive — namely, to combat the laundering of drug money

But the most serious aspect of the PMLA is that it includes a large number of offences in the schedule which have nothing to do with the original purpose of this law – namely, combating the laundering of drug money. The UN resolution on the basis of which the law on laundering was enacted in India spoke only about the offence of the laundering of drug money. This was considered the most serious economic crime which had the potential to destabilise the world economy and endanger the sovereignty of nations, as highlighted above. The preamble to the PMLA endorses it. So, there was global consensus on the need to have a tough law to deal effectively with this crime. Thus, the *raison d'etre* of the PMLA is the crime of the laundering of a huge volume of black money generated from the international drug trade and the spectre of destabilisation of the world economy.

The PMLA's enactment

Further, the PMLA was enacted by India's Parliament under Article 253 which empowers it to make laws for implementing the international conventions. This Article indicates that a law Parliament makes to implement any decision of an international body will be confined to the subject matter of that decision. Item 13 in the Union list of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution is specific on this point. Thus, the law on money laundering enacted under Article 253 and Item 13 of the Union list in the context of the UN resolution referred to above can only be on drug money. Various amendments made in this Act at different times bloated the schedule which now contains such offences which are either ordinary offences listed in the IPC or for which there are special laws in force. Since money laundering as an offence is linked to one of the scheduled offences, the offences contained in the schedule become the starting point of the whole process of operationalisation of the PMLA.

A close look at the schedule will convince a man of ordinary prudence that this law has deviated from its original scheme. The provisions contained in it are draconian which were meant to deal with the dangerous men involved in drug trafficking and the money chain. These provisions are now being used in other scheduled offences too without mitigating their rigour. Offences which by their very nature do not generate crime proceeds of a scale which can destabilise the economy and endanger the sovereignty of the nation are being tried under this law. One such example is the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 which is aimed at curbing corruption among public servants. This Act was added to the schedule of offences in 2009. The PMLA now applies with all its rigour to public servants. Thus, a public servant charged with corruption and a hard-core drug trafficker are treated alike. A very disturbing thing about the PMLA is that an accused under this law is presumed to be guilty until proved innocent.

A fundamental principle of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence is that a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty. PMLA turns this principle upside down. An accused will be denied bail by the entire hierarchy of courts because the bail provision contained in section 45 of the PMLA says that a judge can give bail only when he is satisfied that the accused is innocent. Which judge will take such a risk? So the person will rot in jail for years together without trial.

The bail provision

The bail provision of the PMLA Act (Section 45) is invested with a lot of political significance in present day India. It was held unconstitutional by a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court of India in *Nikesh Tarachand Shah vs Union of India* (2018) as violating Article 14 and Article 21. However, Parliament, with great alacrity, restored this provision with certain amendments which was upheld by a three-judge Bench headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar in *Vijay Madanlal Choudhary vs Union of India* (2022). The top court held that this provision is reasonable and has direct nexus with the purposes and objects of the PMLA Act. Herein lies the problem.

The object of the Act is to curb the laundering of black money and to save the economy from being destabilised. But what about less serious offences which have found a place in the schedule? The learned judges nearly said that inclusion of a particular offence in the schedule comes within the domain of the legislative policy.

The present judicial approach to the issue of bail in PMLA cases appears to be very technical. The judicial perspective on bail was laid out by Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer back in 1978 under the following words in *Gudikanti Narasimhulu And Ors vs Public Prosecutor, High Court Of Andhra*: "Personal liberty, deprived when bail is refused, is too precious a value of our constitutional system recognised under Article 21 that the curial power to negate it is a great trust exercisable, not casually but judicially, with lively concern for the cost to the individual and the community". From Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer to Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, the apex court has travelled a long distance.

AI in elections, the good, the bad and the ugly

Atanu Biswas

is Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata

In an effort to broaden Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reach to a variety of linguistic groups, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has used Artificial Intelligence (AI) to translate his speeches into eight different languages ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, which may potentially be considered India's "first AI election". Yes, the widespread application of AI, with its seemingly limitless possibilities, is likely to bring about a paradigm shift in the general election in 2024.

Social media and campaigns

In practically every election over the past three decades, India's electoral strategy has changed due to the process of an integration with and a capitalisation on emerging technologies. Its spread can be traced to the extensive usage of phonecalls in the 1990s, the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election in 2007 that saw the first "mass mobile phone" elections, the use of holograms in 2014, and, now, the current AI era.

For instance, the significance of social media platforms as essential political campaign instruments will be particularly remembered in relation to the 2014 Indian elections. Many analysts even referred to it as India's first "social media elections" or the "Facebook elections," given the estimated ₹500 crore in digital spending. The BJP, undoubtedly, benefited from being the first to use these technological tools widely to connect with India's sizeable youth population.

A paper in the *Asian Journal of Political Science*, in 2015, titled "India 2014: Facebook 'Like' as a Predictor of Election Outcomes" showed a high positive correlation between the number of 'likes' a party or its leader secured on their official Facebook fan page and their popular vote share. By the time he took office, Mr. Modi was the sixth-most-followed global leader on X (Twitter) and had amassed over 16 million "likes" on Facebook, second only to former U.S President Barack Obama among politicians worldwide.

> The widespread application of Artificial Intelligence is likely to cause a paradigm shift in almost every aspect of an election

The 2019 general election was widely dubbed the "first WhatsApp election" in India. Indeed, in the previous 12 months and earlier, elections in Nigeria, Brazil, and a few Indian States have shown how WhatsApp can be used to spread messages that are designed to mislead voters for political purposes very quickly. In his book, *How to Win an Indian Election* (2019), former election campaign consultant Shivam Shankar Singh explained that WhatsApp is "an effective political platform because it allows for targeted delivery of information to voters and also because it allows an excellent tool to organize and mobilize party workers".

Global elections, AI, the dangers

The global elections of 2024, in contrast, are "AI elections". In January, New Hampshire voters answered a phone call from what sounded like U.S. President Joe Biden. Indeed, it was a robocall made by AI aimed at dissuading Democratic voters not to turn up to polling stations on election day. Two days before parliamentary elections in Slovakia, in September 2023, a recording of a conversation between a journalist and the leader of the pro-North Atlantic Treaty Organization Progressive Slovakia Party was shared on Facebook, purportedly discussing methods of election manipulation. They both immediately called out the audio as fake, and fact checking turned up proof of AI manipulation. But, in a close race, Progressive Slovakia lost out. Was it a "test case" before the global elections in 2024?

It was Argentina's turn in October-November 2023, following which an article in *The New York Times* perceived that "with its expanding power and falling cost, it [AI] is now likely to be a factor in many democratic elections around the globe". Deepfakes were used in the recent Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh and Telangana, either through doctored clips of the game show "Kaun Banega Crorepati" or a fake video of a leader allegedly pushing voters to support their opponent. Additionally, fake accounts that amplify particular messages and generate artificial trends can be orchestrated by AI-powered bots to flood social media sites, yielding the false impression that a particular politician or subject is widely supported. Social media, the old instrument, is, therefore, interwoven with AI technology.

The political landscape is changing

However, AI can play a far wider role in elections than just disseminating disinformation. It can be used in the entire spectrum of campaign strategies, from the preliminary steps of voter identification to the intricate details of content development and delivery. With real-time analytics on campaign performances, AI is raising the bar for political campaigns with its data-driven and effective micro-targeting strategy. The political landscape is changing quickly due to GenAI technology, which presents both the potential and challenges for the 2024 elections.

The United States government has outlawed robocalls using AI-generated voices in its response to the Biden robocall incident. Technology behemoths including Microsoft, Google, OpenAI, and Meta have vowed to combat AI content that aims to deceive voters. But will they be able to complete the task fully proofed?

There is general concern that, similar to Slovakia, election-related generated contents may shape last-minute attempts to deter voters from exercising their right to vote or create an event with a manufactured portrayal of a candidate that is challenging to swiftly debunk. A few months ago, an AI-created image of Donald Trump's arrest went viral. What would happen if a picture like that went viral a day before the election?

AI will be far more efficient five years later, in 2029, but as one might perceive, the world will also be more resilient, accustomed, and prepared for AI's deceptive effects. It is a realm of unknowable unknowns right now. And, a lot of uncertainties remain.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The great Indian election

In its urge to somehow stay on in power, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) could be resorting to the use of many undesirable tactics. Its tall claim of "*na khaunga na khane doonga*" is a narrative that seems to be falling flat in the face of some of its political moves. The BJP may still have many strong advantages such as an absence of strong opponents and a divided Opposition, but its image as a clean party may no longer be resonating with the people.

The party seems to be accommodating many who are involved in corruption and in this the Opposition's claim of the 'washing machine' effect could hold true. The electoral bonds scheme has also established that the party is one that is in search of money whatever the method. In a democracy, such a high-handed and majoritarian party spells danger. I hope the party is taught a lesson or two in this election.

Soundarrajan,
Chennai

A joint platform of Opposition parties to fight the dominant Bharatiya Janata Party in the 2024 elections was always an illusion (Page 1, "Democracy is in danger, warns Opposition at mega Delhi rally", April 1). It is amusing that the Opposition talks about 'opposition unity' just before elections. Have these parties not wasted a precious five years to highlight people's issues and the government's failures? The Opposition parties ought to realise that merely forming an electoral alliance does not spell Opposition unity.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao,
Hyderabad

The cartoon accompanying the article, "Biggest challenge yet for the great Indian election" (Inside pages, 'Elections 2024' page, April 1) was enough to convince me why the BJP, despite its faults, is still the better horse to back.

J.R. Rao,
Hyderabad

MSD, at Vizag

M.S. Dhoni's 16-ball 37 runs, a spell that was laced with three sixes and four fours, against Delhi Capitals ('Sport' page, April 1) spelt delight to his fans. His power-hitting batting remains the same today as it existed in the first edition of the IPL. It is unfortunate that Chennai Super Kings lost the match in Vizag.

K. Pradeep,
Chennai

A speech that put India on the global stage

Priyanjali Malik

is the author of 'India's Nuclear Debate: Exceptionalism and the Bomb'

Seventy years ago, with a speech in the Lok Sabha, Nehru cemented India's claim to leadership, gave impetus to calls that eventually yielded the Partial Test Ban Treaty, and arguably limited horizontal nuclear proliferation by insisting on treating nuclear weapons as beyond the pale.

On April 2, 1954, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru made a speech in the Lok Sabha that would put India on the global stage of nuclear disarmament. Prompted by the U.S.'s 'Castle Bravo' thermonuclear test of the previous month, which was reportedly so powerful that it overwhelmed all measuring instruments, Nehru called for "a standstill agreement" on nuclear testing. This speech was marked by pragmatism, vision, and self-assurance. Newly decolonised India, with all the problems of nation-building and none of the traditional markers of international power such as military and economic might – or even nuclear weapons to disarm – was an unlikely candidate for this leadership role; yet such was Nehru's belief in India's global standing that he not only called for this moratorium but also pushed for it at every opportunity and forum. With this speech, he cemented India's claim to leadership, gave impetus to calls that eventually yielded the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT), and arguably limited horizontal nuclear proliferation by insisting on treating nuclear weapons as beyond the pale.

The standstill agreement

The standstill agreement is remarkable for its willingness to accept an incremental approach to what was fast becoming an insurmountable problem of disarmament against the backdrop of the Cold War. The four elements of the proposal called for an immediate moratorium on testing; urged the United Nations Disarmament Commission to address both the immediate moratorium and the longer-term goal of prohibiting the production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons; sought to build public pressure on nuclear states by calling for greater disclosure on the destructiveness and effects of these weapons; and called on all 'states and peoples of the world' to recognise the global threat posed by nuclear weapons. Nehru took disarmament out of the confines of the UN Disarmament Commission (with its limited membership) and made it a global problem.

India had effectively put the nuclear weapons states on notice. Nehru was asking them to not only recognise that their tests were imperilling the globe but also calling for more information on the effects of nuclear tests and radiation to exert global pressure on them to disarm. India followed this up with interventions at the UN, including a draft resolution in 1955 calling for a halt to testing, and progress to be reported to the Disarmament Commission. Simultaneously, Nehru convened a conference of scientists to study atomic energy and the effects of nuclear explosions in 1954 and, had the Suez Crisis and the Hungarian Revolution not intervened in 1956, the first meeting of what became Pugwash might well have happened in Delhi, for invitations had been sent out by Bertrand Russell and Joseph Rotblat to the scientists assembled.

Moral force

It is easy, 70 years later, with the history of India's diplomacy and active participation in negotiations for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty at the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Commission, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (neither of which New Delhi eventually signed for reasons of national interest), to take for granted India's active role in nuclear disarmament. However, there was nothing preordained about this. India in 1954 was poor and weak. This was before the Bandung Conference, so it did not even have the backing of the non-aligned nations. What it did have, though, was moral force. As Nehru explained in his first address to the UN in 1948, "I have no fear, even though India, from a military point of view, is of no great consequence. I am not afraid of the bigness of Great Powers, and their armies, their fleets and their atom bombs. This is the lesson which my Master taught me. We stood as an unarmed people against a great country and a powerful empire."

Placing India on a global stage on account of its moral influence was a brilliant move. Of course, the sheen of morality soon wore off as India grappled with using force in Hyderabad and Goa to bring them within the Indian Union, and in discovering that morality would not defeat China. But it gave India a significance far in excess of what might be justified by its material strength. Nor was this stance purely naïve. Nehru spoke the language of disarmament because India had pressing development needs for its scarce resources that might be swallowed up by an arms race. But there was a Plan B. The Atomic Energy Act, 1948 allowed for the sequestration of the nuclear programme to shield any potential weapons development, should the need arise. Homi Bhabha, the father of India's nuclear programme, wanted to develop nuclear weapons. Nehru did not give the go-ahead, but did not entirely discourage him either.

The legacy of the speech in the Lok Sabha, when Nehru explained to his people first what India was doing to secure its place in the world, was most immediately felt in the PTBT that was eventually negotiated by the nuclear weapons states. When the treaty opened for signatures in 1963, India was the fourth to sign. The call for greater information about the effects of nuclear radiation and the mobilising of global opinion against atomic weapons helped solidify a norm against nuclear use that has ensured that these weapons have not been used in anger again after 1945. And, most importantly, the speech put India on a global stage as a voice of reason and morality, and in Nehru's words from 1948, to "be a power for peace and for the good of the world."

The disgruntled Rajputs of Gujarat

The recent protests show the community's frustration at being sidelined in the BJP

STATE OF PLAY

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On March 22, during an election campaign speech in Rajkot in Gujarat, Union Minister and Rajkot Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Parshottam Rupala unwittingly triggered outrage when he praised the Dalits at the expense of the Kshatriyas or Rajputs.

Commenting on British rule, Mr. Rupala said, "Even kings and royals bowed down to the British, started family bonds with them, broke bread with them, and even married their daughters to them but this Rukhi Samaj (a Dalit community) did not budge. I salute them for their fortitude and strength. It is this strength that has kept Sanatana Dharma alive…Jai Bhim!" His reference to *roti-beti vyavahar* (breaking bread and entering into marital relations) caused anger that neither he nor the party anticipated in a State where the BJP enjoys near-complete dominance.

As clips of the speech went viral on social media, the Rajputs, who are descendants of royal or princely families in Saurashtra, began to protest. This was the region where more than 100 large and small princely states existed at the time of independence.

Taken aback by the response, Mr. Rupala, who belongs to the Patidar or Patel community, hastened to apologise twice, stressing that he will regret his remarks for the rest of his life. "It was not my intention to show the royal families or Kshatriya community in poor light… I just wanted to elaborate on the atrocities committed by *vidharmis* (people of other faiths) on our country and culture," he said. But the apology cut no ice with the community. In fact, in parts of Saurashtra, Mr. Rupala's statements have revived old caste rivalries between the Rajputs and Patels.

In Saurashtra, caste tensions over the years have resulted in conflicts and even killings. In 1988, a Patel legislator of the Congress, Popat Sorathiya, was shot dead in public by a man named Anirudhdhsinh Jadeja on August 15. The following year, Cabinet Minister Valabbhbhai Patel was assassinated by another Kshatriya, also called Anirudhdhsinh. In 1995, Jayanti Vadodaria, a civic body member of the BJP in Gondal, was murdered by members of the Kshatriya community.

In the heydays of the Congress in Gujarat, and particularly in Saurashtra, Rajputs held their sway over Patels despite being fewer in number. But in the mid-1990s, the complete consolidation of the Patels in favour of the BJP helped the saffron party wrest the State from the Congress. Since 1995, the BJP has won seven Assembly elections in the State in a row. Today, both the Patels and the Rajputs firmly support the BJP.

However, power is not equally distributed. There are five MLAs and one Rajya Sabha BJP member from the Rajput community from the Saurashtra-Kutch region in the BJP. But Kshatriyas or Rajputs who are Ministers in the State or Central government exercise little power, according to a political commentator. "Today, Patidar domination in the ruling party and in the government is complete. The Chief Minister is a Patel and Union Ministers including Mr. Rupala and Mansukh Mandaviya are Patels. There is not a single notable Kshatriya face in the State cabinet," he says. He believes that the recent protests by the Rajputs show their frustration with being sidelined within the BJP.

While it is unlikely that there will be any major adverse impact electorally for the BJP or for Mr. Rupala, it would nevertheless be wise for the ruling party leadership to dwell on why only a handful of communities such as the Patels, Brahmins, or Banias corner a large share of the pie in the State government or at the Centre, while other communities including the Kshatriyas, Other Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes remain on the margins. The Scheduled Tribes in Gujarat are roughly the same in number as the Patidars (around 15% of the population), yet, there is not a single tribal leader in the Union Cabinet from the State.

In Gujarat, under the BJP, it is common to see a Dalit Minister be put in charge of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment and an Adivasi Minister be put in charge of the Department of Tribal Development and sometimes Forest and Environment, but never in charge of, Finance, Revenue, or Home, the most important portfolios in terms of power and resources. The only exception was during the Vijay Rupani period when a Rajput leader, Pradipsinh Jadeja, was made Minister of State, Home.

Two States: a comparison on access to life-saving C-sections

While access is equitable, C-section rates are alarmingly high in Tamil Nadu, pointing to the need for corrective measures

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

A study published by IIT Madras shows that in Tamil Nadu, access to cesarean section (C-section), an essential medical intervention that can save lives when vaginal deliveries are risky, is more equitable compared to India's average. However, C-section rates among the women of Tamil Nadu are also alarmingly high, especially in private hospitals, pointing to the need for corrective action, the study points out. The report also compares Tamil Nadu's figures with those of Chhattisgarh to show how in certain States, C-sections are more prevalent among richer sections of society, while the poor lack access to it.

A C-section delivery refers to a surgical procedure in which an incision is made in the woman's abdomen to deliver one or more infants. According to the World Health Organization, access to hospitals that are equipped to perform such procedures is crucial to ensure the safety and well-being of both the mother and child in the event of medical necessity. Maternal and neonatal mortality rates decline in countries which have C-section rates of about 10%, the WHO concludes. However, the agency also warns that if C-section rates go beyond 10%, it will not necessarily reduce maternal mortality. In 2021, global C-section rates exceeded 20%. They are projected to rise to 30% by 2030.

Chart 1 shows the change in the share of births delivered by C-sections in public sector hospitals in India, Tamil Nadu, and Chhattisgarh between 2015-16 and 2019-21. In public sector hospitals, nearly 40% of women underwent C-sections in Tamil Nadu in 2019-21. That is, of every 100 deliveries in public sector hospitals, 40 were C-sections. This is much higher than India's average of around 16% and Chhattisgarh's 10%.

Chart 2 shows the change in the share of births delivered by C-sections in private hospitals across India, Tamil Nadu, and Chhattisgarh between 2015-16 and 2019-21. The gap narrowed considerably in private hospitals: close to 64% women underwent C-sections in private sector hospitals in Tamil Nadu in 2019-21 compared to India's average of around 50% and Chhattisgarh's 59%. "In Chhattisgarh, a woman is 10 times more likely to undergo a C-section in a private hospital than in a public hospital. This could be due to a lack of adequate or high-quality services in public health institutions," the study concludes. Assuming that poorer households choose public hospitals for deliveries and richer households prefer private ones, this points to inequitable access at the national level and more equitable access in Tamil Nadu.

The study also shows that the location of childbirth (whether in a public or private institution) had the most considerable influence on the decision to get a C-section delivery. This suggests that 'clinical necessity' isn't always the driving factor for surgical births. Throughout India and Chhattisgarh, individuals who were better off financially tended to choose C-sections more frequently, whereas, in Tamil Nadu, the situation was distinct, with poorer individuals being more prone to undergo C-sections in private hospitals.

Chart 3 shows the disparity among women from the poor and non-poor categories in their access to C-sections in public hospitals across India, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh in 2015-16 and 2019-21. **Chart 4** shows the same for private hospitals. It shows that the poor were more likely to have C-sections in private hospitals in Tamil Nadu. "The inversion in income-based inequality in Tamil Nadu in private institutions in 2019-21, with a greater proportion of the poor than the non-poor delivering via C-section, is difficult to explain," the study says.

Access and misuse

The charts were sourced from the report titled, "Variations in the prevalence of caesarean section deliveries in India between 2016 and 2021 – an analysis of Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh", published in BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth

Chart 1: Change in % of births delivered by C-sections in **public hospitals** in India, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh between 2015-16 and 2019-21

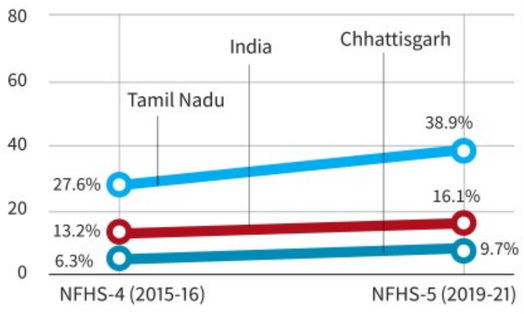


Chart 2: Change in % of births delivered by C-sections in **private hospitals** in India, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh between 2015-16 and 2019-21

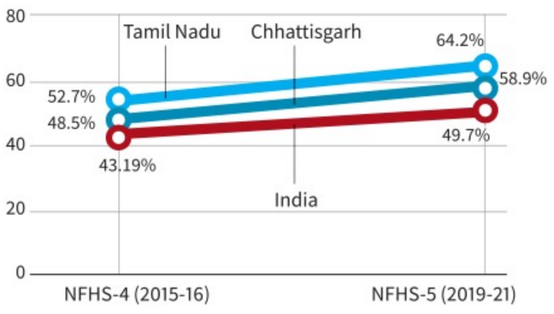


Chart 3: Disparity among women from the poor and non-poor categories in their access to C-sections in **public hospitals** across India, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh in 2015-16 and 2019-21. Figures in %

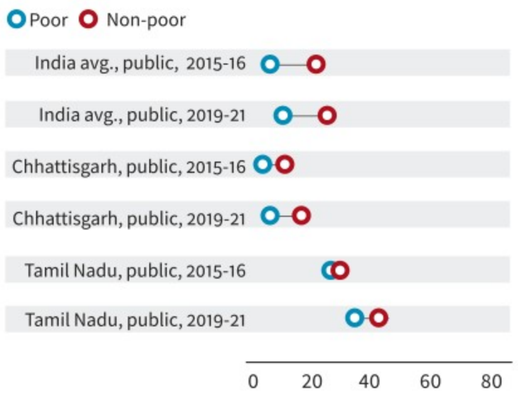
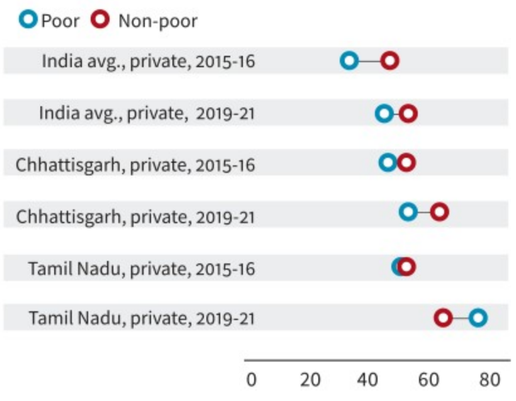


Chart 4: Disparity among women from the poor and non-poor categories in their access to C-sections in **private hospitals** across India, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh in 2015-16 and 2019-21. Figures in %



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 2, 1974

Israel seeks more planes, missiles from U.S.

Washington, April 1: The Israeli Defence Minister, Gen. Moshe Dayan, to-day asked the United States for more planes, tanks and missiles to offset communist aid to Syria and other Arab nations.

Gen. Dayan presented his shopping list to the U.S. Defence Secretary, Mr. James Schlesinger, at a meeting to-day at the Pentagon.

During television interviews yesterday and to-day, Gen. Dayan said Israel particularly needed planes and anti-aircraft missiles. He alleged that communist aid to Syria included the presence of a brigade of Cubans on Syrian territory, an assertion which surprised officials here.

While U.S. intelligence services had known for a long time that small groups of Cuban technicians where training Syrians to operate anti-aircraft missiles and the Soviet-built MIG fighters, they had estimated the Cuban presence at less than the several battalions Gen. Dayan said were in Syria.

Israel still has $700 millions to spend of the $2,200 millions in additional military aid granted by Congress to compensate for the losses sustained during the October war in West Asia.

Gen. Dayan arrived in the U.S. last week to present the Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, with detailed Israeli proposals for troop disengagement with Syria on the Golan front.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 2, 1924

Railway management

London, Mar. 31: In the Commons to-day Sir Charles Yata asked whether it was proposed to proceed with the placing of the East Indian and Great Indian Peninsula Railways under State management, in view of the position in the Legislative Assembly and danger to the safety of passengers and maintenance of service if the present management was weakened under State control. Mr. Richard's Under Secretary for India replied that Lord Olivier did not consider there was any reason for modifying the decision to place these railways under State management. Sir Charles Yate declared that the Manager of the Egyptian Railway had resigned because the Minister had taken all power out of his hands and asked if it was to be allowed in India. The speaker intervened at this stage.

From Page One

Centre, Congress spar over Katchatheevu issue

Mr. Jaishankar, in his press conference at the BJP's headquarters on Monday, said it was wrong to say that the "ceding" of Katchatheevu was an "old issue" that was being resurrected keeping the Lok Sabha election in mind. "It has been frequently raised in Parliament and has been a matter of frequent correspondence between the Centre and the State government," Mr. Jaishankar said, adding that he had replied to the current Tamil Nadu Chief Minister (M.K. Stalin) "at least 21 times".

He further said, "We have to find a solution. We have to sit down and work it out with the Sri Lankan government." He said that Prime Ministers from the Congress displayed indifference towards Katchatheevu island and gave away Indian fishermen's rights despite legal views to the contrary.

Attacking the DMK over its public posturing against the agreement, Mr. Jaishankar said its leader and then Chief Minister Karunanidhi was kept fully informed about the agreement, first reached in 1974 between India and Sri Lanka.

"The Congress and DMK raised the issue in Parliament as if they bear no responsibility for it, while they are the parties which did it," he said, adding that the DMK very much "connived" with the Congress in 1974 and afterwards in creating this situation.

The Opposition leaders cited a 2015 RTI response of the Ministry that clearly stated that previous agreements didn't "involve either acquiring or ceding of territory belonging to India".

"Tit for tat is old. Tweet for Tweet is the new weapon. Will Foreign Minister Mr. Jaishankar please refer to the RTI reply dated 27-1-2015... The Reply justified the circumstances under which India acknowledged that a small island belonged to Sri Lanka," former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said in a post on X.

Former Union Minister Anand Sharma said India's strategic interests and relationship with neighbours must not be lost to electoral narrative.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh asked if Mr. Jaishankar was "disowning the reply given by the Ministry of External Affairs when the same Dr. Jaishankar was Foreign Secretary".

No coercive action against Cong.: I-T Dept.

The Congress has challenged the High Court order that gross receipt was taxable.

"Gross receipt is never taxable. Only total income is taxable. We are a political party, not a profit-making organisation," Mr. Singhvi argued. He raised the issue that Section 13A of the Income Tax Act provided tax exemption to political parties.

Mr. Mehta said the total of over ₹3,500 crore was a "block assessment" of the past seven years. This was excluding the ₹135 crore recovered from the party through attachment. He said the department had willingly made the "concession" to avoid coercive measures in view of the prevailing circumstances of the elections. He made it a point to state that the leeway had been allowed to the Congress despite the fact that the tax demands of March 2024 for over ₹3,500 crore were not strictly relatable to the appeals pending in the top court.

Posting the case for hearing on merits, the top court recorded in its order that "the issues which arise in these appeals are yet to be adjudicated, but a statement has been made by the Solicitor-General that the Income Tax Department does not wish to precipitate the matter in as much as no coercive steps shall be taken with regard to the demand of ₹3,500 crore approximately".

The court further recorded the statement of the department that the Congress need not have any "apprehensions regarding any coercive steps".

The Congress had raised the issue that the slew of tax notices issued on the eve of the Lok Sabha polls would tilt the level playing field in favour of the ruling BJP.

New rule to save fliers from tiring wait

Alternatively, passengers can be taken to the pre-existing security check zone for which a sterile passage will have to be created. Airlines may also print fresh boarding cards, as per the protocols.

During a delay, an airline will assess whether there is a requirement to request for return boarding. It will then have to consult a Chief Airport Security Officer (CASO) or an official of the BCAS who will examine and approve the request.

If an airline fails to request for such a passage and follow the prescribed SOP despite an unreasonable delay, the BCAS and CASO can also hold it accountable.

In January, when several parts of the country saw their worst fog in several years, there were many instances of passengers being stuck inside aircraft from three to 12 hours. On January 14, a passenger even hit a pilot on a Delhi-Goa flight because they were confined within the aircraft for nearly three hours and the flight had been delayed for over eight hours. The same aircraft's return journey from Goa was delayed for 12 hours and forced the airline to divert to Mumbai airport for refuelling, following which the passengers refused to leave the tarmac area after being deplaned, resulting in a fine of ₹1.2 crore on the airline and ₹90 lakh on the Mumbai airport.

The same day, passengers travelling on an Air India flight from Delhi to Vancouver were stuck inside a stationary plane from 4:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Ex-diplomats caution govt. on Katchatheevu

Former envoys to Sri Lanka say External Affairs Ministry's position over the past decade has been in line with stance taken by previous governments; they say any change in position on the issue could affect relations with neighbouring countries and damage India's credibility in the region

NEWS ANALYSIS

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Any move by the government to revisit the 1974 India-Sri Lanka agreement on Katchatheevu island could have a broader diplomatic impact on India's ties in the region and raise questions about other bilateral negotiations, warned former diplomats.

Most also questioned whether External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's comments at a press conference on Monday on "ceding" Katchatheevu island, and finding a "solution" for the situation indicated a shift in the Ministry's position as outlined in a number of parliamentary replies over the past decade, submissions in the Supreme Court, and Right to Information (RTI) responses that categorically denied there had been a "ceding" or "acquisition" of territory in the 1974 agreement.

According to former National Security Adviser (2010-2014) Shiv Shankar Menon, reopening the half-century-old agreement by the government could be a "self-goal".

"The situation on the ground is hard to reverse, but such issues being raised by the country's leadership will damage the credibility of the country and could be a self-goal," Mr. Menon, who served as Foreign Secretary (2006-2009) and India's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka (1997-2000), told *The Hindu*.

"Sovereignty and territorial integrity are not issues where the government's position changes when there is a change in government. If the government were to reopen old agreements, it would set a bad example," said former High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Ashok Kantha, who added that the "whole architecture" of agreements with India's neighbour could be "damaged if there is a change in the original understanding".

> Such issues being raised by the country's leadership will damage the credibility of the country and could be a self-goal
>
> **SHIV SHANKAR MENON**
> former National Security Adviser

Former Foreign Secretary (2009-2011) and High Commissioner to Sri Lanka (2004-2006) Nirupama Menon-Rao said that political trends in India, especially in Tamil Nadu, are watched closely in Sri Lanka and the impact on bilateral ties "cannot be inconsequential". She pointed out that most recently in 2022, the government had followed previous governments' position, even saying in court that the task of the retrieval of Katchatheevu was "impossible".

In Ministry responses from 2014 to 2022, available on its website, the government has consistently said – as previous governments had – that the "island of Katchatheevu lies on the Sri Lankan side of the India-Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary Line", also referring to a number of writ petitions on the issue that makes the matter "sub-judice" in the Supreme Court.

In addition, according to a reply in Parliament dated March 15, 2017, by then Minister of State for External Affairs General V.K. Singh, the problem of fishermen being arrested by the Sri Lankan government was not linked to Katchatheevu island directly.

Mr. Menon asked: "If PM Modi questions an agreement a previous government entered into, then what will stop a future government from questioning an agreement the present government is negotiating?"

They also said that the 1974 agreement had been responsible for an improvement in relations between the two countries. Under the agreement with Sri Lanka, Katchatheevu was found to lie in Sri Lankan waters, although Indian fishermen retain the right to visit to celebrate St. Anthony's Day at the church on the otherwise deserted island, and also are allowed to dry their nets there. However, Indian fishermen cannot fish near the island, which has been the source of contention raised regularly by the Tamil Nadu government.

A similar agreement with Bangladesh in 2015 had settled the decades-old land boundary enclaves issue, and India's decision to accept the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague's verdict in 2014 in favour of Bangladesh's maritime boundary claims, led to an overall improvement in Delhi-Dhaka relations. The reopening of the Katchatheevu island row follows the Modi government's decision to write to Pakistan's government last year, calling for renegotiation of the 1960 Indus Water Treaty.

RSS group gives CAA 'eligibility certificates' to Hindus from Pak.

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Through camps in Rajasthan, it has been helping people apply for citizenship on the CAA portal

For the past one week, a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)-affiliated group has been organising camps and issuing "eligibility certificates" to members of the Hindu community from Pakistan to help them apply for citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA).

The group, Seemajan Kalyan Samiti, which operates in the areas along the Pakistan border, has helped around 330 people from Jaisalmer, Barmer, and Jodhpur in Rajasthan upload their documents on the citizenship portal – *indiancitizenshiponline.nic.in* – launched by the Home Ministry.

The CAA grants citizenship to members of six "persecuted" non-Muslim communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh.

The certificate, a mandatory document to be issued by a "locally reputed community institution", is to be enclosed with an affidavit and uploaded on the CAA portal along with other documents.

Vikram Singh Rajpurohit, an advocate and a member of the group, told *The Hindu* that since the Samiti is a registered organisation, it could issue the certificate. "One of our *mantris* [office-bearers], Tribhuvan Singh Rathore, is signing the eligibility certificates," he said.

The certificates, which could also be issued by a local priest, are to validate the religion of the applicant, and whether he or she continues to follow the faith.

A photograph posted on the Samiti's Facebook page said the group was organising "free citizenship application camp" in Jaisalmer. Around 60 people are seen sitting on the floor in a room, which has posters of Bharat Mata and pictures of former RSS chiefs K.B. Hedgewar and M.S. Golwalkar.

Mr. Rajpurohit said, "There are hundreds of people who came to India before 2010 and are yet to receive citizenship. I met a woman who came here in 1998 but does not have citizenship. In Jodhpur alone, there are around 5,000-6,000 such people." There are around 400 Pakistani Hindu refugee settlements in cities like Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner and Jaipur in Rajasthan where an estimated two lakh people are said to be living. These people came to India in different phases.

It is to be noted that since the Pakistani Hindus entered India legally they were eligible for citizenship under Section 5 and Section 6 of the Citizenship Act, 1955.

Kejriwal sent to Tihar jail for judicial custody till April 15

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The Rouse Avenue Court on Monday sent Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to judicial custody till April 15 in connection with a money laundering case linked to the now-scrapped Delhi Excise Policy.

He was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on March 21. He was sent to Tihar jail after Special Judge (PC Act) Kaveri Baweja passed the orders.

Later Mr. Kejriwal's counsel moved an application seeking to allow him to read three books in jail – the Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana and *How Prime Ministers Decide*. He also sought permission for a special diet and to have a religious locket.

Orders for his judicial custody came after the ED, through Additional Solicitor-General S.V. Raju, submitted in the court that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief had not been cooperative in the interrogation.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal being brought to the Rouse Avenue Court on Monday. ANI

"He is found to be giving evasive replies and concealing information during the custodial interrogation," the ED said.

The ED, in its application, also submitted to the court that when Mr. Kejriwal was asked about Vijay Nair, he had stated that Mr. Nair did not report to him but to Delhi Cabinet Ministers Atishi Marlena and Saurav Bharadwaj.

Mr. Nair, as claimed by the ED, was the communication in-charge of the AAP and was the first person from the party to be arrested in the case.

The Chief Minister was shown the "evidence" of hawala transfers to the tune of ₹45 crore approximately, which was corroborated with call records, seized data of a hawala firm in Goa, and proof of payments being done in part cash and part bill and WhatsApp messages showing this arrangement.

"Even after showing all the above evidence, the arrestee claimed unawareness even though the beneficiary of these funds is the AAP which is headed by the Chief Minister," the agency claimed.

Issue at hand is larger than tax demand, says Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday welcomed the reprieve it got from the Income Tax (I-T) Department on the tax demand of ₹3,500 crore but said the entire episode raised issues that were larger than a tax demand.

Taking to X, former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram asked if demands could be raised on a political party when all parties were exempt from income tax. "Can a demand be raised on a political party for tax, interest and penalty that will effectively cripple the party? Can such demands be made during the period when national elections are held to elect a new Lok Sabha? What will prevail? Democratic elections or tax demands," he asked.

Rajya Sabha member and senior advocate Vivek Tankha, who had appeared for the Congress in the Income Tax Appelate Tribunal, said "truth ultimately wins".

Arunachal Pradesh will always be a part of India: Jaishankar

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Arunachal Pradesh was, is and will always be a part of India, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Monday in response to China renaming yet another 30 places in the State, which it claims as 'south Tibet'.

The development follows closely after the recent visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the State for the inauguration of the Sela tunnel, built at an altitude of 13,000 ft.

"If today I change the name of your house, will it become mine? Arunachal Pradesh was, is and will always be a state of India. Changing names does not have an effect," Mr. Jaishankar said, responding to questions at a press conference. He also said that the Indian Army was deployed in Arunachal Pradesh.

China's Ministry of Civil Affairs made an announcement on March 30, which said it had "standardized" the names of 30 places in "southern Tibet". The first such "standardised" list of six places was released in 2017, followed by a second list of 15 places in 2021, and a third list of 11 places in 2023.

S. Jaishankar

In the past too, the Ministry of External Affairs had rejected the renaming. "We have seen such reports. This is not the first time China has made such an attempt. We reject this outright. Arunachal Pradesh is, has been, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India. Attempts to assign invented names will not alter this reality," the MEA's spokesperson said in April 2023.

Following Mr. Modi's visit to Arunachal Pradesh on March 9, China issued statements asserting its claims over the area and even lodged a diplomatic protest with India.

Responding to questions on March 23, after delivering a lecture at the Institute of South Asian Studies, the National University of Singapore, Mr. Jaishankar termed China's repeated claims as "ludicrous", and said that Arunachal Pradesh was a "natural part of India".

There was also friction over a statement by the U.S. recognising Arunachal Pradesh as part of India. "The U.S. recognises Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory, and we strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to advance territorial claims by incursions or encroachments, military or civilian, across the Line of Actual Control," the U.S. State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel had said on March 9.

China had reacted sharply to state that the China-India boundary issue was a matter between the two countries, and that Washington had nothing to do with it.

SC allows Hindu priest to continue worship in Gyanvapi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday managed a balancing act, allowing a chosen Hindu priest to continue to offer worship inside the cellar or *tehkhana* on the Gyanvapi premises while Muslims used the mosque and the surrounding courtyard for performing *namaaz*.

A three-judge Bench of Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud found it "appropriate" to order the *status quo* in order to "enable both communities to offer religious worship".

"This way *namaaz* is offered on the premises of the mosque. The *tehkhana* is safeguarded. The arrangement would be maintained between now and the trial," Chief Justice Chandrachud remarked orally. The court ordered that the *status quo* would not be disturbed by either contesting party.

The Hindu plaintiffs, represented by senior advocate Shyam Divan, claim that the entire area of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi belonged to a temple of Swayambhu Lord Adi Vishweshwar since Satyug.

They said the temple, which once stood on the Gyanvapi plot, was brought down by the "Farman of Emperor Aurangazeb in the year 1669".

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, for the mosque's management, Anjuman Intazamia Masjid, claimed the suit filed in a Varanasi court by the Hindus was only a ruse to encroach into the mosque land.

Police personnel deployed outside Gyanvapi Mosque and Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

ELECTIONS 2024

Pappu Yadav to fight from Purnea seat

Bihar leader Pappu Yadav, who merged his Jan Adhikar Party (Loktantrik) with the Congress, has decided to contest the Purnea seat. He will file his nomination on April 4.

In Bihar, the INDIA bloc has struck a deal in which the RJD will contest 26 seats, the Congress nine and the Left five. Purnea has gone to the RJD.

However, there has been an ongoing tussle over the seat in the bloc even though RJD chief Lalu Prasad gave Rupauli MLA Bima Bharati the nod to contest the seat. Mr. Pappu has been staking claim to contest from Purnea.

On Monday, he posted a message on X saying, "For the convenience of my friends of Purnea constituency spread across the country and those who want to participate in my nomination, instead of April 2, the date of filing my nomination is April 4."

Pappu Yadav will file nomination papers on Thursday. FILE PHOTO

Weeks after RLD joined NDA, Siddiqui resigns

Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) vice-president Shahid Siddiqui on Monday said he has resigned from his post and the party's primary membership.

Mr. Siddiqui's move comes weeks after the RLD joined the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance. "Yesterday, I have sent my resignation letter from the membership of Rashtriya Lok Dal and the post of national vice-president to national president Jayant Singh. Today, when India's Constitution and democratic structures are in danger, remaining silent is a sin.... but with a heavy heart I am forced to distance myself from RLD. India's unity, integrity, development and brotherhood are dear to all. It is the responsibility and duty of every citizen to save it," he said. He added that the RLD becoming a part of the NDA put him in a "piquant situation".

"There should not be any sense of overconfidence... Both war and election should be fought with complete caution and full strength

YOGI ADITYANATH
Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister

BJD MP and actor Mohanty joins the BJP

Anubhav Mohanty, the outgoing Biju Janata Dal MP from Kendrapara Lok Sabha seat and a prominent actor in Odia cinema, on Monday joined the BJP ahead of elections. Mr. Mohanty had successfully fought the 2019 Lok Sabha election by defeating Baijayant Panda, BJP's national vice-president.

"The only factor in this poll is Modi. Everyone wants to make him the PM again. The result will be same even if all the Opposition parties come together

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA
Assam Chief Minister

EC censures Ghosh, Shrinate over remarks

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Censuring Bharatiya Janata Party leader Dilip Ghosh and Congress leader Supriya Shrinate, the Election Commission on Monday said it was convinced that the two leaders made "low-level personal attacks" against women and thus violated the provisions of the model code of conduct.

In separate notices issued to both, it said the leaders' election-related communications will be specially and additionally monitored from now on.

A copy of the notices were also marked to the respective party chiefs asking them to sensitise their functionaries to be careful while communicating in public domain.

"You may please issue specific advisory to all party functionaries involved in election campaign and in interactions in public domain not to commit such type of violation as in the instant case, besides following the MCC in letter and spirit so as not to trigger a chain reaction of similar comments vitiating the election campaign," it said.

'Offensive comments'

The EC last week slapped show-cause notices on Mr. Ghosh and Ms. Shrinate for their "offensive", "insulting" and "undignified" comments against West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and actor and BJP candidate Kangana Ranaut, respectively.

Their remarks were "undignified and in bad taste" and violated the poll code, the EC had said. The MCC has been in force since March 16 when the schedule for the Lok Sabha polls were announced.

The action against Ms. Shrinate was taken following a complaint by the BJP which alleged that she had posted a picture of Ms Ranaut along with "derogatory remarks" on Social media platform, X. The notice to Mr. Ghosh, BJP leader from Bengal, was issued after a complaint by the Trinamool Congress for mocking the West Bengal Chief Minister's family background.

Falling hook, line and sinker for island pact, but no big catch

The Katchatheevu row has been dusted off yet again, but the Ramanathapuram constituency near which the island is situated has largely supported candidates belonging to the DMK or Congress or those with backing of either of the parties

IN FOCUS

T. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

Katchatheevu, a barren islet about 14 nautical miles off Rameswaram in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu, refuses to die as a subject of political discourse, though nearly 50 years have lapsed since India and Sri Lanka signed a pact to demarcate the maritime boundary line.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi kicked up a controversy over Katchatheevu, a few weeks ahead of the Lok Sabha election in the State. Citing a report in a daily and posting it on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), he said: "Eye-opening and startling! New facts reveal how Congress callously gave away Katchatheevu..."

Yet, the utility of Katchatheevu as an electoral issue is doubtful, if one goes by the results of Lok Sabha elections in the Ramanathapuram constituency since 1977. Of the 12 elections held so far, only twice (1998 and 2014) did the constituency return candidates who were not backed by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the Congress, both of which are now the targets of attack by their adversaries. In 1974, the Congress was in power at the Centre and the DMK in the State. On all other occasions, the winners either belonged to the DMK or the Congress or enjoyed the backing of either of the parties.

In 2019, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) bagged the constituency, as a part of the front that had the DMK and the Congress. Even now, the IUML is seeking re-election with the support of the two parties. However, A. Anwhar Raajhaa, senior All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader who represented Ramanathapuram during 2014-2019, feels it is his party that will stand to benefit under the present circumstances.

"When it was decided in 1974 that Katchatheevu was a part of Sri Lanka, the Congress and the DMK were the ruling parties. Besides, the BJP, which has been in power for 10 years, did not do anything to get it back," he points out.

He adds it was his party's chief and former State Chief Minister Jayalalithaa who launched a "genuine legal battle" for retrieval of the islet.

Emphasising that Katchatheevu has never caused any electoral impact, A. Gopanna, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee vice-president, says this time too, there will be no difference. "People of the State would not believe Mr. Modi's words, as it is well known that he is making his point for the sake of electoral gains. Besides, there is no relationship between the islet and fishery dispute, as Sri Lanka is richer in marine resources than us," he asserts.

Political row: Katchatheevu is a barren islet about 14 nautical miles off Rameswaram in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu. FILE PHOTO

People of the State would not believe Mr. Modi's words, as it is well known that he is making his point for the sake of electoral gains

A. GOPANNA
Congress leader

'Exposes the betrayal'

But, C.R. Kesavan, national spokesperson of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), refers to the implications of the issue, by contending that the matter "exposes the betrayal" of the DMK-Congress combine.

Pointing out that the two parties were in power at that time, he describes the ceding of the islet as a "Shakuni-like match-fixing" by the two parties to give away this land, which is of "strategic national interest to India".

Take action over Rahul's fixing remark, BJP urges EC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A day after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at the Opposition INDIA bloc rally accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "match fixing" the 2024 Lok Sabha through the use of enforcement agencies against Opposition leaders, the BJP urged the Election Commission (EC) to take "strict action".

A BJP delegation comprising Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and BJP national general secretary Arun Singh lodged the complaint against Mr. Gandhi. Addressing press-persons after their meeting with EC, Mr. Puri said Mr. Gandhi's comments during the meet were "extremely objectionable" as they were "not just in violation of the model code of conduct but could have serious implications".

"Addressing the public meeting, Mr. Gandhi said this [the Lok Sabha election] is a fixed match. He also said that the Centre has deployed its people in the EC. He also raised questions on the credibility of the EVMs and said the Constitution will be cancelled (changed) after elections," Mr. Puri said.

Mr. Singh accused Mr. Gandhi of repeatedly making such comments, and said the EC should consider censuring him from speaking during the Lok Sabha election.

New toll rates to come into effect after LS polls

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) has asked the state-owned NHAI to go ahead with the calculation of new toll rates on highways, which kicks in annually from April 1 across most of the tolled highway stretches in the country, but said the new user fees should be applicable only after the Lok Sabha election.

Responding to a communication from the Road Transport and Highways Ministry, the poll body has asked the National Highways Authority of India to defer the toll fee hike.

Annual exercise

The annual revision of toll hikes, which was expected to be in the range of an average 5%, was to come into effect on April 1 for most of the tolled highways and expressways.

"The process required for the decision on the power tariff may be continued by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission. However, tariff award shall be made only on the completion of poll in the relevant State, i.e after the poll date/dates in the state. In respect of the clarification sought, it is stated that user fee may be seen in context of the power tariff as mentioned in the Commission's instruction cited above," the EC said on Monday.

According to a senior official, the change in toll fee is part of an annual exercise to revise the rates that are linked to the changes in the Wholesale Price Index-based inflation.

Alliance between Apna Dal (K) and AIMIM birthed by BJP, says SP

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party on Monday said the alliance between the Apna Dal (Kamerawadi) and All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) for the Lok Sabha election in Uttar Pradesh has been orchestrated by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to divide secular and pro-democratic votes in the State.

The Samajwadi Party said the PDA (*pichda*, Dalit and *alpsankhyak*) communities are solidly behind the INDIA bloc and are aware that such alliances are attempts to make the BJP victorious.

"They (Apna Dal and AIMIM) were reading the BJP's script. The alliance has been formed to help the BJP by dividing PDA votes. But secular and pro-democratic people are aware and will not fall into the trap. The voters have made up their minds to unseat the BJP from power and such tactics will yield no result," Samajwadi Party chief spokesperson Rajendra Chowdhary told *The Hindu*.

New tie-up: AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi with Apna Dal (K) leader Pallavi Patel announcing the alliance, in Lucknow on Sunday. ANI

The Apna Dal (K) and the AIMIM on March 31 announced the formation of the PDM Nyay Morcha

Mr. Chowdhary said Pallavi Patel, the Apna Dal (K) leader and daughter of party chief Krishna Patel, should relinquish the membership of the Assembly as she had won on the SP symbol in the 2022 Assembly polls from the Sirathu seat. "What is the point of still remaining an MLA from the SP when she has parted ways," he asked.

The Apna Dal (K) and the AIMIM, led by Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi, on March 31 announced the formation of the PDM Nyay Morcha, describing it as a political front for justice for *pichda*, Dalits and Muslims in Uttar Pradesh.

Seat-sharing row

PDM resonates with the PDA pitch designed by former Apna Dal (K) ally, the Samajwadi Party.

A few days ago, the Apna Dal (K) broke ties with the Samajwadi Party over seat-sharing after party chief Akhilesh Yadav said the alliance was only for the 2022 Assembly election. The announcement came after the Apna Dal (K) unilaterally declared to fight the Lok Sabha seats of Mirzapur, Kaushambi and Phulpur under the INDIA bloc.

The Kurmi-centric Apna Dal was founded by Krishna Patel's husband Sonelal Patel during the 1990s, but has since seen a vertical split. One faction, named the Apna Dal (Sonelal), is led by Ms. Krishna Patel's estranged daughter and Union Minister, Annupriya Patel. The other faction is led by her other daughter Pallavi Patel. Both factions claim to enjoy considerable support among the Kurmi community in pockets of eastern U.P. The Kurmis, an influential Other Backward Classes (OBCs) community has a sizeable presence in roughly 10 Lok Sabha seats in the State.

NC fields candidate from Anantnag, ends chance of PDP tie-up

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The National Conference (NC) on Monday nominated senior leader Mian Altaf as its candidate for the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat, putting an end to the Congress's efforts to stitch together a pre-poll alliance between INDIA bloc members, including the NC and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), in the Kashmir Valley.

"There will be no better candidate than Mian Altaf from the constituency. He has vast popularity across various segments of the society. He would garner substantial support from the people," NC vice-president Omar Abdullah said.

NC spokesperson Imran Dar said it was a "unanimous decision" of the party to field Mr. Altaf. "We hope the voters will give a decisive mandate and a befitting reply to those forces who snatched J&K's identity," Mr. Dar said.

The NC's decision to field a candidate from the south Kashmir seat has brought an end to several months of efforts by the Congress to negotiate a seat arrangement between the NC and the PDP.

The two parties are the main constituents of the Peoples Alliance for the Gupkar Declaration, fighting for restoration of the pre-August 2019 position of J&K, when the erstwhile State enjoyed special constitutional status under Article 370 and 35A.

The PDP has not reacted to the development. It has been insisting on fielding a candidate from one of the three seats in the Valley.

The PDP's first choice was Anantnag-Rajouri where its chief Mehbooba Mufti had won in the past and a seat the party considers a bastion. However, the NC has been adamant on fielding candidates from all the three seats, arguing it won them in the 2019 election. J&K has five Lok Sabha seats, two in the Jammu region and three in Kashmir. The Congress, the PDP and the NC have decided to fight together in the Jammu region.

INBRIEF

IAF jets to conduct landing drills on highway in Kashmir

A strip of road in south Kashmir's Bijbehara on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway will be used to conduct emergency landing drills by aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) from Monday night, according to officials. Sukhoi fighters and Tejas light combat aircraft are likely to participate. This is the first such drill to be conducted in the Valley. The IAF will use highways as an alternative runway during emergencies. Landings will be conducted on 3.5 km of highway in Bijbehara. An official said all civilian vehicles were directed on Monday to divert to the old national highway alignment. The health, fire service, and other departments will also participate in the drill.

NPPA revises ceiling prices of over 900 drug formulations

There has a been marginal hike in the prices of antibiotics and painkillers from Monday. The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) had allowed price hike for select medicines by 0.00551%. The Department of Pharmaceuticals has now issued its annual list of revised ceiling prices for 923 scheduled drug formulations and revised retail prices of 65 formulations. This revision is part of a routine exercise. The prices of medicines were hiked by 12% in 2023. In 2019, the NPPA used its emergency powers to raise the ceiling prices of 21 essential drugs by 50% after several companies applied for the discontinuation of products due to high cost.

SC notice to EC on plea to check EVM, VVPAT counts

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to the Election Commission (EC) on a writ petition seeking a direction to mandatorily cross-verify the count in electronic voting machines (EVMs) with votes verifiably recorded as cast by counting all voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) slips.

A Bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and Sandeep Mehta tagged the petition filed by lawyer and activist Arun Kumar Agrawal, represented by advocate Neha Rathi, with pending ones on the same issue.

Ms. Rathi argued for a complete count of VVPAT slips in elections as opposed to the current practice of verification of only five randomly selected EVMs through VVPAT paper slips.

The petition further challenged the EC's guideline that mandated sequential VVPAT verification, that is, one after the other, causing undue delay.

The petition proposed simultaneous VVPAT verification by deploying more personnel for counting in each constituency. "This would allow VVPAT verification to be done in five to six hours," the plea claimed.

Rise in demand for MGNREGS points to failure of govt.: Cong.

The data point to 'widespread unemployment and stagnant wages' that runs counter to development narrative being talked, says Cong. leader

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Reacting to the latest statistics of the flagship rural employment guarantee scheme showing that demand for work is more than the pre-pandemic level and on a steady rise, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh has said it is a "living monument" to the Narendra Modi government's many failures.

As per the statistics, a total of 305.2 person days (one person working a normal shift) were generated in financial year 2023-24, which is 12 crore more person days than in 2022-23 and 40 crore more than the first pandemic year in 2019-20. In many ways, 2022-23 is seen as the first year after the country came out of the pandemic shock and it took time for the economy to pick up.

In a detailed statement here, Mr. Ramesh pointed out that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) was designed by the Congress government as a safety net for the rural poor. "It is demand-driven which means that employment is generated only when there is no alternative paying better wages," Mr. Ramesh said.

Hitting out: MGNREGS was designed by the Congress government as a safety net for the rural poor. FILE PHOTO

The Congress general secretary said that data points to "widespread unemployment and stagnant wages". He accused the government of turning a blind eye, since the data run counter to the "development" narrative propagated by the government. "A government that refuses to listen to today's grim reality will be unsuccessful in combating it," he said.

Copying PM's own words that he used in 2015 to describe the programme, Mr. Ramesh said the increase in MGNREGA person-days last year is in fact a "living monument" to the Modi government's many failures.

He said that despite the Modi government's dismissive attitude towards the programme, it had to rely on the scheme as a primary source of income support for the poor during the pandemic and unfortunately even in the present.

Heatwave conditions likely during election season, warns IMD

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Advisories have been issued to the EC and the States to take adequate precautions.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday warned of "above-normal" heatwave conditions in most parts of the country in April and May. These are the months when polling will be held across the country.

Advisories have been issued to the Election Commission (EC) and the States to take adequate precautions.

Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, north Karnataka, Odisha, and western Madhya Pradesh, which on average see one to three heatwave days during April and May, are likely to experience two to eight heatwave days, the IMD said. Heatwave days occur when day temperatures in a place are at least 4.5 degrees Celsius above normal, or greater than 45 degrees Celsius, on two consecutive days.

While these regions are particularly vulnerable, above-normal temperatures are likely over the entire country barring Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and most of the northeastern States.

Union Minister for Earth Sciences Kiren Rijiju said that advisories had been issued to the EC and the States to "take precautions" and equip polling booths with oral rehydration salts for booth officials or voters who may experience a heatstroke.

"Electors are advised to carry wet towels to protect themselves from dehydration and women electors are advised to avoid bringing small children to booths during hot weather conditions," the EC had said in an advisory on March 16. Given that the Lok Sabha election is held in the summer months, these are routine advisories sent by the EC to its officials.

One of the reasons for the expected hotter than usual summers is the continuing effect of the El Nino, M. Mohapatra, Director-General, IMD, said. Associated with the heating of the surface waters of the Central Pacific, the El Nino is linked to drying up of the rains in India.

Agencies must focus on crimes that truly threaten nation: CJI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Underlining that investigative agencies such as the Central Bureau of India (CBI) have been spread "too thin" over the years, Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on Monday said they must pick their battles to promote efficiency and concentrate attention on crimes that truly threaten the nation's security, economic health, and public order.

Justice Chandrachud made the remarks while delivering the 20th D.P. Kohli Memorial Lecture on "Adopting Technology to Advance Criminal Justice", on the Central Bureau of Investigation Raising Day.

Expressing concern over instances of "unwarranted" confiscation of personal devices during searches, the CJI said they highlight the pressing need to strike a balance between investigative imperatives and individual privacy rights.

He said that in the era of digital transformation, the interplay between law and technology can result in better crime detection and also ensure criminal justice reform.

"In embracing the capabilities of technology, we reaffirm our commitment to the principles of fairness, equity, and accountability. By leveraging these tools responsibly and ethically, we ensure that the benefits of technological advancement reach all members of society, regardless of their background or circumstances," he said.

(With PTI inputs)

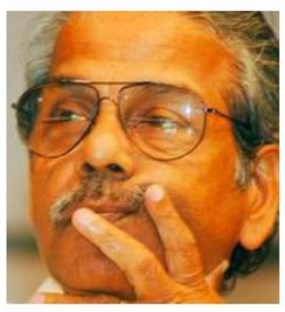
Author quits Sahitya Akademi citing political interference

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

A controversy erupted in the Sahitya Akademi on Monday after Malayalam author C. Radhakrishnan resigned from the membership of the premier literary body's general council, citing political interference.

In a letter addressed to Sahitya Akademi member secretary K. Sreenivasarao, Mr. Radhakrishnan said: "I strongly protest against this year's Akademi Festival having been inaugurated by a Cabinet Minister of the Government of India, a person without any known credential whatsoever in literature."

He was referring to Union Minister of State for Culture Arjun Ram Meghwal inaugurating the 39th edition of "Sahityotsav: The festival of letters" on



C. Radhakrishnan

March 11. The event witnessed the participation of more than 1,000 authors in over 170 languages.

Though set up by the government in 1954, the Akademi functions as an autonomous organisation, says its website.

The author, known for his critically acclaimed novels, further said: "I would like to clarify that I am not against any particular political party. I protest against the politicisation of administration of culture eroding the independent stature of the Akademi."

The Sahitya Akademi was quick to respond, and said Mr. Radhakrishnan's written resignation was "misleading".

In a statement, Akademi president Madhav Kaushik said Mr. Meghwal was himself a writer. "He is well-versed in Rajasthani and Hindi," he said listing some of the Minister's published works. "Besides, he actively participated in many programmes for the development of Rajasthani language and extended full cooperation in various capacities for recognition of Rajasthani as an Indian language in the VIIIth schedule of the Constitution," the statement said.

Mr. Radhakrishnan though was unmoved. "Sure, anyone who writes at least a letter, is a writer," he toldin a curt reply.

'Pannun case probe part of national security interests'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The investigation into the alleged plot to assassinate U.S.-based Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun is part of India's national security interests, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Monday. He was speaking at a press conference at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi.

Earlier, U.S. Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti, in an interview to news agency ANI, had described the alleged plot to kill Pannun on American soil as an "unacceptable red line".

"It is something we are investigating as we believe our own national security interests are involved in that investigation," Mr. Jaishankar said in response to a question about Mr. Garcetti's comment on the involvement of an Indian official in the alleged assassination plot.

"The position of my government is that in this particular case, there has been certain information provided to us which we are investigating," the Minister said. "So, as and when we have something to say on the investigation we would be very glad to speak about it. At this point we have nothing more to say," he added.

Mr. Garcetti had expressed satisfaction about the Indian investigation and said, "No government or government employee can be involved in the alleged assassination of one of your own citizens... That's just an unacceptable red line."

In an all-time high, defence exports cross ₹21,000 crore

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India's defence exports crossed ₹21,000 crore for the first time, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Monday.

The figures indicated that defence exports had grown by 31 times in the past 10 years compared with FY 2013-14, the Defence Ministry said.

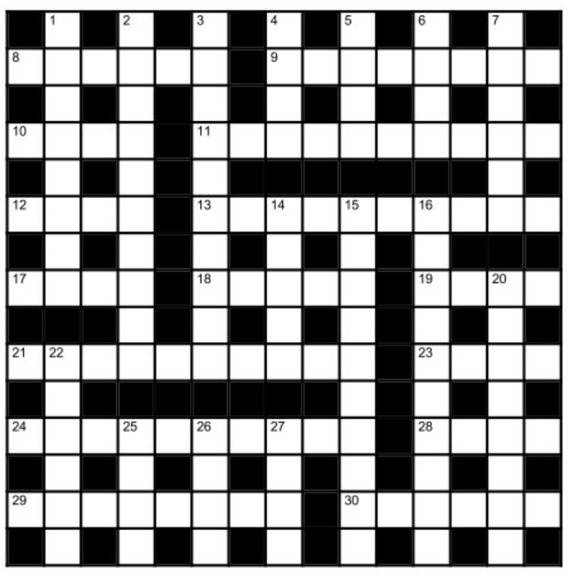
"Delighted to inform that defence exports have scaled to unprecedented heights and crossed ₹21,000-crore mark for the first time in the history of Independent India!," Mr. Singh said on X. "Defence exports have reached the level of ₹21,083 crore in the financial year 2023-24 which is a spectacular growth of 32.5% over the previous fiscal."

TH CROSSWORD + 14138

(set by Vidwan)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 It goes into more than one rule (6)
9 Part of Indian diet (3-5)
10 Returns two-fold praise (4)
11 Unmanageable sappers' works, involving resistance (10)
12 Election Victory! Back to people finally! (4)
13 How to get a message carried by the waves? (10)
17 Part of mega lavish celebration (4)
18 Medico retained by business for data repository (2-3)
19 Support black sensitivity (4)
21 Travelling faster than word of mouth? (10)
23 Chance of noble backing king (4)
24 Can a small magazine art possibly be a symbol of constitutional democracy (5,5)
28 Large, adult, male black sheep (4)
29 Left ousts judge! Removal leads to poll! (8)
30 Slight wound (6)

Down

1 Beverage Company from California, County Los Angeles (4,4)
2 Focus on awfully mean, defining quality of a person (6,4)
3 Reportedly procure for channel - small derivatives (2-8)
4 It indicates pitch conditions like erodability, flatness basically (4)
5 Right, right! Acres for a vegetable! (4)
6 No right plan for unwise (4)
7 Country kid, keeping regularly ahead (6)
14 Run into idle idiot (5)
15 Popular and kind of mostly modern timeless tactic (10)
16 Independent bills are questionable source of moral belief in individual and political freedom (10)
20 Gathering up litter inside well (8)
22 A new blue rum lacks potency (6)
25 Part of body of knowledge about Catholic revolutionary (4)
26 Each item has a receipt (4)
27 Managed King's file (4)

SUDOKU

1		7	5					
	2	9			6	7		
	8		2				4	
		2		9	4			8
			1		7			
9			8	3		6		
	7				2		6	
		8	4			5	2	
					8	9		3

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

F	E	N	G	S	H	U	I		S	U	P	I	N	E
	R		E		E		M		O		E		O	
S	I	S	T	R	A			P	E	R	A	N	N	U	M
	T		A		V		E		T		A		R	
P	R	E	T	T	Y	P	A	S	S		L	O	I	N
	E					D		C				T		S
B	A	D	M	O	U	T	H		C	H	I	C	H	A
			A		T				O		E			
S	C	A	T	T	Y		D	O	M	E	S	T	I	C
	O		R				R		E				N	
A	N	T	I		S	T	E	W	A	R	D	E	S	S
	D		A		T		S		G		R		T	
T	E	A	R	O	O	M	S		A	M	A	Z	O	N
	M		C		R		E		I		M		C	
A	N	T	H	E	M		R	A	N	S	A	C	K	S

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

3	4	1	6	9	7	5	2	8
6	5	7	2	1	8	3	9	4
2	8	9	4	5	3	1	6	7
9	3	5	1	8	2	4	7	6
1	7	6	9	3	4	2	8	5
4	2	8	5	7	6	9	3	1
7	9	2	8	4	5	6	1	3
8	1	4	3	6	9	7	5	2
5	6	3	7	2	1	8	4	9

FAITH

The key role of parents

The importance of parents in our lives is repeatedly emphasised by the dharma sastras. For an atma to gain liberation, it must first take birth. Since our parents are responsible for our birth, they deserve respect, said Velukkudi Krishnan in a discourse.

Secondly, parents protect us and provide for our needs. So they play the role of a *poshaka* – protector.

Thirdly, they do what we like and also what is good for us. It might sometimes happen that the two are contradictory. For example, a child may want to eat something that is not nutritive. The parents indulge it by allowing a small portion of what it likes. But they also ensure that the child takes good food, which will strengthen it.

When children err, the parents correct them. We often find that when people have broken some law, the parents are quick to say that their children are not inherently bad, but have picked up wrong notions from others.

Even while trying to reform a child, a parent makes excuses for the child's conduct. This quality is *vatsalya*. When a parent scolds a child or punishes it, the parent feels more pain than the child. Lord Narayana has all the above qualities.

That is why the Lord and His Consort are considered Universal parents.

INBRIEF

NMDC logs record 45 MT iron ore output, 44.5 MT FY sales

India's largest iron ore producer NMDC reported a record 45.1 million tonne production and 44.48 MT sales in the year ended March 31. The state-owned miner said it had become the first mining company in the country to cross the 45 MT mark - on its best-ever yearly physical performance. Compared with the previous fiscal, when it had clocked 40.82 MT iron ore production and sold 38.22 MT, the output was 10% higher and sales was 16% more.

Infosys receives ₹341 crore tax demand for AY 2020-21

Infosys has received a tax demand of ₹341 crore for assessment year 2020-21 from the Income Tax Department, the IT services company said on Monday, adding it is evaluating filing an appeal against the said order. The Bengaluru headquartered company said it is in the process of evaluating the impact of the order on its financial statements for the quarter and year ending March 31, 2024. Infosys also said it is evaluating filing an appeal against the order. PTI

Value of ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation drops to ₹8,202 cr.

The total value of ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation, which was ₹3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, when the withdrawal of ₹2,000 banknotes was announced, declined to ₹8,202 crore at the close of business on March 29, 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said on Monday. "Thus, 97.69% of the ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation as on May 19, 2023, has since been returned," the central bank said in a status update.

March's gross GST of ₹1.78 lakh crore lifts FY24 revenue to ₹20.2 lakh cr.

Gross revenues from domestic transactions grew 17.6% in March, outpacing February's 13.9% rise; revenues from goods imports, a calculation by *The Hindu* indicates, shrank about 5% year-on-year in March, after February's 8.5% increase

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue hit its second-highest level of ₹1,78,484 crore in March, even as the pace of growth in collections slowed to 11.5%, from February's 12.5%. This lifted the tally for 2023-24 by 11.6% to a little over ₹20.18 lakh crore.

Net GST revenue, after accounting for refunds, grew at a faster pace of 18.4% in March to touch ₹1.65 lakh crore, compared with February when they had grown 13.6%. For the full financial year, net GST revenue were ₹18.01 lakh crore, a 13.4% growth.

"Average monthly collection for this fiscal year stands at ₹1.68 lakh crore, surpassing the previous year's average of ₹1.5 lakh crore," the Finance Ministry said in a statement, attributing March's surge in inflows to "a significant rise in GST collection from domestic transactions".

Gross revenue from domestic transactions (which typically include taxes on services imports) grew 17.6%, compared with a 13.9% rise in February. While the Ministry did not share the growth trajectory for tax from goods imports, a calculation by *The Hindu* indicates revenue shrank about 5% in March, after February's 8.5% rise.

On a sequential basis, March's gross GST revenue rose 6% from February, and net revenue rose 9.3%.

GST Compensation Cess at ₹12,259 crore, was reckoned as the third-highest monthly collection.

Central GST collections exceeded FY24's revised estimate, while there was a modest shortfall in GST compensation cess inflows, said ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar. For FY25, "the implicit growth needed to meet the Interim Budget Estimate has come down to single-digits [less than 10%], which appears likely to be exceeded," Ms. Nayar added.

Robust takings

Finance Ministry says average monthly collection for FY24 was ₹1.68 lakh crore, beating FY23's average of ₹1.5 lakh crore

- Gross takings for 2023-24 rise 11.6% to a little over ₹20.18 lakh crore
- **Net GST revenue grew at a faster pace of 18.4% in March to ₹1.65 lakh crore**
- GST Compensation Cess at ₹12,259 crore, was reckoned as the third-highest monthly collection

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	74,015	0.49
Gold	68,420	1.58
Brent oil	87.89	–

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3252.10	55.00
Adani Ports	1375.90	34.05
Apollo Hosp	6457.25	100.45
Asian Paints	2871.00	24.25
Axis Bank	1053.10	5.90
Bajaj Auto	9042.15	-106.00
Bajaj Finserv	1646.00	2.15
Bajaj Finance	7250.95	5.70
Bharti Airtel	1217.35	-11.25
BPCL	600.70	-1.70
Britannia Ind	4895.20	-16.05
Cipla	1498.65	1.70
Coal India	442.05	7.95
Divis Lab	3567.95	122.65
Dr Reddys Lab	6250.35	92.45
Eicher Motors	3946.65	-72.65
Grasim Ind	2292.55	5.25
HCL Tech	1556.70	13.15
HDFC Bank	1470.50	22.60
HDFC Life	634.75	1.40
Hero MotoCorp	4680.75	-41.55
Hindalco	568.60	8.35
Hind Unilever	2285.90	21.55
ICICI Bank	1099.65	6.35
IndusInd Bank	1542.40	-10.60
Infosys	1495.45	-2.60
ITC	426.70	-1.65
JSW Steel	871.95	41.75
Kotak Bank	1790.70	5.20
L&T	3838.00	74.10
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4882.60	-55.80
M&M	1915.95	-5.40
Maruti Suzuki	12569.60	-30.75
NestleIndia	2585.60	-36.75
NTPC	342.35	6.55
ONGC	269.90	1.85
PowerGrid Corp	280.15	3.25
Reliance Ind	2969.55	-2.15
SBI Life	1489.95	-10.30
State Bank	758.30	5.95
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2431.75	71.95
Sun Pharma	1629.25	8.70
TataConsumerProduct	1086.90	-9.30
Tata Motors	992.25	-0.55
Tata Steel	163.15	7.30
TCS	3916.75	40.45
Tech Mahindra	1244.55	-3.55
Titan	3738.40	-63.40
UltraTech Cement	9954.40	205.25
Wipro	484.95	4.85

RBI can take global leadership in balancing growth and inflation: Modi

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), having achieved the unique feat of balancing growth and inflation control, can become a model for the world and assume global leadership, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday while speaking at an event marking the commemoration of RBI's 90th year in Mumbai.

The Reserve Bank was set up on April 1, 1935 in Calcutta as a joint stock company and it was nationalized on January 1, 1949. Incidentally, Mr Modi had attended the 80th foundation day function in 2014.

Narendra Modi

"While several developed countries of the world are trying to recover from the economic shock of the pandemic, the Indian economy is creating new records. The RBI has taken India's success global," he said. Stating that balancing inflation control and growth was a unique requirement for any developing country, he said, "RBI has become a model for this and can take global leadership."

He said for the next 10 years the RBI should develop monetary policy tools to meet the expectations of India's youth and cater to the needs of emerging sectors such as space technology, digital technology and tourism. "RBI needs to think out of the box," he emphasized.

Pointing out that in 2014, when he attended the 80th anniversary event, the condition of the Indian banking sector was abysmal, he said rising NPAs had threatened the stability of the banking sector.

"There were concerns from all over. But today India's banking system has established itself as strong and sustainable one. It has now come back to profit and is showing record improvement in credit growth," he added.

SEBI updates complaint redressal site for investors

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has introduced a new version of its complaint redressal system – SCORES 2.0 – to strengthen investor complaint redress mechanism in the securities market.

The process has been made more efficient through auto-routing, auto-escalation, monitoring by the 'Designated Bodies and reduction of timelines, SEBI said in a statement.

CIL output rises 10%

Coal India's production rose by 10% to 773.6 million tonnes (MT) in 2023-24 but fell short of its production target of 780 MT for the fiscal, according to an exchange filing. Production was 703.2 MT in the preceding fiscal, the miner said in a filing. PTI

SUVs drive auto sales to record highs in FY2024, dispatches cross 42 lakh

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Driven by robust demand for sports utility vehicles, passenger vehicle sales in India soared to a record high in FY24 with dispatch of more than 42 lakh units.

Overall vehicle dispatches from maker to dealers rose to 42.3 lakh units in FY24, an increase of 9%, compared with 38.9 lakh units in FY23.

SUV's share to overall passenger vehicle dispatches rose to 50.4% in FY24 against 43% in FY23.

"This is the first time passenger vehicle sales have crossed the 40 lakh mark in India," said Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) Executive Committee Member Shashank Srivastava.

SUV segment grew by 28% year-on-year; hatchbacks by 12%; sedans by 6%, while MPVs (Multi Purpose Vehicles) grew by 19% and vans by 6.5% in FY24, Mr. Srivastava said.

But he said the industry expects to see "single-digit" sales growth in the current fiscal due to the high base effect of FY24.

MSI reported its highest-ever yearly domestic sales of 17,93,644 units and record exports of 2,83,067 units in FY24.

Hyundai sales rise 8%

While rival Hyundai Motor India (HMI) also recorded its best-ever overall sales at 7,77,876 units for FY24, a growth of 8%, over 7,20,565 units in FY23.

HMI COO Tarun Garg said the industry growth in rural market outpaced urban with SUVs continuing to be the fastest-growing segment.

'Hydro-power records steepest fall in four decades'

Reuters
SINGAPORE

India's hydroelectricity output fell at the steepest pace in at least 38 years during the year ended March 31, a *Reuters* analysis of government data showed, as erratic rainfall forced further dependence on coal-fired power amid higher demand.

The 16.3% drop in generation from India's biggest clean energy source coincided with the share of renewables in power generation sliding for the first time since Prime Minister Narendra Modi committed to boost solar and wind capacities at the United Nations climate talks at Paris in 2015.

Panasonic, IOC moot JV for lithium-ion cells, eye EVs

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

State-owned refiner Indian Oil Corporation and Panasonic Group company Panasonic Energy Co. have signed a binding term sheet to draw a framework of their proposed JV to manufacture cylindrical lithium-ion cells in India.

The JV is in anticipation of expanding demand for batteries for two-and three-wheelers and energy storage systems in India.

The two firms are conducting a feasibility study on battery utilisation technology to facilitate India's transition to clean energy.

Pilot unrest at Vistara forces the cancellation of 49 flights

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

Ahead of its merger with Air India, discontent among pilots who abstained from reporting to work forced Vistara to cancel at least 49 flights across its network on Monday.

Following the development, the airline announced it had decided to temporarily pare the number of flights it operates.

'Crew unavailability'

"We have had a significant number of flight cancellations and delays in the past few days due to various reasons including crew unavailability," Vistara said in a statement. "We are working towards stabilising the situation and will resume operating our regular capacity very soon," the airline said in its first-ever statement on the issue, which has been simmering since February resulting in 10-15 daily cancellations and delays.

Vistara added that it was also deploying the bigger Boeing 787-9 and A321 neo aircraft on domestic routes to accommodate passengers affected by these cancellations. The airline said that it would also offer alternate flights and refunds to affected customers.

A silent protest from unhappy pilots, a manpower constraint that has left the airline without a pilot buffer, and poor roster planning are said to be behind the cancellations, according to industry sources.

In February, the airline announced a new pay structure for its pilots. The new structure left the First Officers deeply aggrieved as it resulted in a pay cut of ₹80,000 to ₹1.4 lakh.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This notice is issued on behalf of my client **SRI.D.J.SANDEEP** to bring to the notice of the general public, that the Original Sale deed dt.18.01.2013, Registered document No. 4716/2012-13 of Book I, Stored in CD No.RRND98 and registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar Jayanagar (Rajajeshwarinagar), Bangalore in respect of property bearing Vacant Site No.70, BDA Khatha No.BDA/Rev/West/Kum/ 70/2012-13 formed in Sy.No.58/7, Situated at **Kumbalagodu Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore,** measuring **East to West 40 ft** and **North to South 30 ft,** total measuring **1200 Sq.ft.,** has been lost at the time of travelling. All the persons are hereby informed not to deal or carry out any transaction with anyone on the basis of the said Sale deed. If anyone has already carried out or being carried out kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address **within 7 days** from this present along with that Police Complaint is also given vide Lost Report **No.0988975/2024, dated 25.03.2024.**

Y. Sowmya Yadav, Advocate
Samvruddhi Legal, # 83, Ground Floor, 5th 'A' Cross, 21st Main, J.P. Nagar 2nd Phase, Bangalore-78. **M : 9916343921**

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. CAO/CN/BNC/ 116/2024 Dated: 27.03.2024

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following work.

Item of Work	Appx. Value
Gadag-Wadi new BG line: Miscellaneous works from Km. 210/500 to 257/260 between Shahapur and Wadi (Jn) station. **(Tender Ref. No. W.496/GDG-WD-58)**	Rs. 42,62,04,106/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Up to 15:00 hrs. of 18.04.2024**

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Deputy Chief Engineer / Construction Works / Bengaluru Cantonment
PUB/783/AAV/PRB/SWR/2023-24
South Western Railway-SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. BE-29-2023-24-0T-33,34,35

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following works:

OT No.	Description of Work	Approx. Value
33	Improvement of illumination in goods sheds yards and yards of major stations over KSR Bengaluru division	Rs. 1,89,77,806/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Up to 15:00 hrs. of 23.04.2024**

34	Provision of energy efficient electrical fixtures, occupancy/ motion sensors and solar street lights at IRIDM / Hejjala in connection with sustainable buildings, Provision of energy efficient BLDC ceiling fans in place of conventional ceiling fans in service buildings over KSR Bengaluru division & Bengaluru Cantonment Proposed Construction of New RPF Barrack 50 beds - Electrical arrangements	Rs. 50,60,225/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Up to 15:00 hrs. of 17.04.2024**

35	Replacement of over aged Non-BEE rated pumps with energy efficient BEE.5 star rated pumps under Energy Efficiency works along with provision of backup pumps (Phase-1)	Rs. 52,01,400/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Up to 15:00 hrs. of 19.04.2024**

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer Bengaluru
PUB/782/AAV/PRB/SWR/2023-24
South Western Railway-SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. 11/2024 Dated:26.03.2024

The undersigned on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tender through IREPS only for supply of following items:

Description in brief: Set of FTRTIL WSPD items: N2 Board for WSP System of LHB type coaches, MV Board, N1 BOARD and GE BOARD of M/s. Faively part. nos **(Tender No. L8236595A) (Qty:40 Nos)**

Last date for submission of bids: **Up to 10:30 hrs. of 16.04.2024**

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Senior Divisional Materials Manager Bengaluru
PUB/781/AAV/PRB/SWR/2023-24
South Western Railway-SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

Materials Management Department
Addendum Auction Programme (Special)
Notice No:04/2024

E-Auction will be conducted for disposal of Ferrous scrap, Non-Ferrous scrap, other Misc scrap, condemned Wagon, Coaches& Locos, Scrap Rails and other Permanent Way scrap material.

Sl. No.	E-Auction Conducted By	Existing Auction date which is cancelled	Re-Scheduled Auction date for 10/04/24	Material for auction
1	GSD/PER	10/04/24	12/04/24	The details of items to be sold in e-auction will be available in catalogue www.ireps.gov.in website

All other auctions scheduled for April'24 remains unaltered

For detailed terms and conditions and downloading of catalogue please visit our web-site **http://www.ireps.gov.in ->E-Auction->Sale->Live Auctions**

Principal Chief Materials Manager Dy.CMM/G/PER

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified that, my clients have agreed to purchase the Schedule Property from its owner, **SRI.A.SURYANARAYANA GUPTA** S/o late Ashwathnarayana Setty, residing at: No.66, Shankara Park, Rangarao Road, Shankarapuram, Bangalore-560004.

Apart from the said owner, if any other person/s have any manner of claim or interest or demand over the Schedule property or any part thereof by way of sale, lease, mortgage, gift, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, pre-emption or otherwise howsoever, they are hereby requested to file their objection/s (along with the photocopies of the documents on which they are relying), with the undersigned within **10 days** from the date of publication of this notice. Objection/s received thereafter will not be binding on my clients.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the residential property bearing Municipal No.66, PID No.49-62-66, measuring East to West (69ft + 70ft)/2 and North to South (44ft + 42.6ft)/2, in all measuring 3006 Sq.ft., together with a building comprised of ground plus two upper floors, situated at Rangarao Road, Shankara Park, Shankarapuram, Bangalore-560004 and bounded on the:

East by : Mutt's property
West by : Rangarao Road
North by : C.V.K.Iyengar's residence
South by : Dr.Krishnaswamy's House

Sd/- **S.F. GOUTAM CHAND**
Advocate
GOUTAM ASSOCIATES
No.60, 2nd Floor, Kanakapura Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560 004.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Dr. Harish Kumar N S/o Late. P. Narasimahaiah @ Appaji gowda & Smt.D.Gowramma and Grandson of Late. Sri.H.Dasappa and Smt. Yellamma am one of the legal heir of Yellamma Dasappa Collaborations families movable & immovable properties do hereby proclaim and publish this public notice on my behalf for all legal implications.

I wish to bring to the kind notice of the General public that myself and my Grand parents are the absolute owners in possession of our ancestral properties comprising of the estate properties of Harohalli - 33 Acres on NH-209, Yellamma Dasappa Institute of Technology (YDIT) 5.5 acres, Raghuvanahalli, Bengluru, M/s Ramakrishna Hotels & M/s Ramakrishna Lodges, Kapali Theatre complex-SC Road, Majestic, Vani theatre complex at kanakapura and all other the properties in legal disputes among the family members in Bengaluru City Civil and Sessions Courts, High Court, Municipal Courts at Kanakapura is not partitioned as per law and having continued legal dispute for the past 30 years as the property belongs to the HUF in which I am also one of the legal heirs for my share of properties.

It is learnt from the valuable sources that some of the members of our family have kept my mother Smt.D. Gowramma in their captive and is innocent and quite ignorant of the legal documents and she was made an accused in one of the cheque bounce cases leading to judicial custody and imprisonment is curtailed by my efforts in a Criminal case in order to protect the interests of my family and from the unforeseen land grabbing and property looting and illegal sale. I bring to the notice of the Gen-Public that the mentioned properties if alienated to unknown persons by way of complicating of the legal issues is punishable under law to both the buyers and sellers. Hence this public notice.

Dr. HARISH KUMAR N
Shree Appaji Gowramma Estate
NH 209, Harohalli Taluk, Harohalli Hobli, Bengaluru District, Mob.No. 9535953809

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public that I am investigating the right, title, interest, benefits, entitlements of whatsoever nature of the owners of the property i.e. **Mr. Hari Babu S/o Chandran J** aged about 36 years, residing at No.19, First Cross, Doctors Layout, Kasthuri Nagar, Bengaluru-560 043, having Aadhar Card No.5417 5559 4513 and PAN No. ABOPH5322F, which is more particularly described in the schedule hereunder called as **"Schedule Property".** My client **Sri R. Srinivasa Reddy S/o Rudrappa Reddy,** aged 57 years, R/at No.3M-683, Third Main, OMBR Layout, Banasawadi, Bengaluru-560 043, is intended to purchase the property has entered into oral agreement to sell and paid token advance. All persons including any individual, a Hindu Undivided Family, a company, banks, financier, institution/s, nonbanking financial institution/s, a firm, an association of persons or a body of individuals, whether incorporated or not, lenders and/or creditors having any objection, claim. right and or interest in respect of schedule property or any part or portion thereof by sale, memorandum of understanding, exchange, mortgage, pledge, charge, gift, trust, inheritance, succession, possession, lease, tenancy, maintenance, easement/s, license, bequeath, share, assignment, lien, attachment, development rights, right of way, lis pendens, reservation, agreement, of any liability of commitment or otherwise or demand of any nature, whatsoever are hereby requested to inform the same in writing, supported with the original documents, to the undersigned having their office address mentioned below, within **20 days** from the date of this publication, failing to file objections within the prescribed time, such objections will not be considered and further proceedings will follow.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of vacant site bearing **No.5M-635** (which includes 5M-637) measuring East to West 20.73 + 20.35/2 Meters and North to South 23.50 Meters totally measuring 482.69 Meters, situated at **Old Madras Road Banaswadi Road Extension, Bengaluru,** formed by Bengaluru Development Authority bounded on:

East by 6th Cross Road, West by Plot No.5N-633, North by: Plot No.4CM-634, 4CM-636 and 4CM-638 and South by 5th Main Road.

Sd/- **(P.S. MANJUNATHA)** Advocate, Above JK Tyres, Before HP Petrol Bunk, NH-75 Service Road, Hosakote-562 114, Bengaluru Rural District.

KABUL

Nine children killed in landmine blast in southeastern Afghanistan

AFP

Nine children were killed in a blast in southeastern Afghanistan that was caused by a landmine laid during the country's decades of conflict, a provincial official said on Monday. The mine went off as a group of young boys and girls were playing with it in the Geru district of Ghazni province on Sunday. AFP

LONDON

U.K. says Channel crossings on small boats hit a record this winter

GETTY IMAGES

Channel arrivals on small boats to the U.K. hit a record in the first quarter of 2024 with a nearly 42% rise over last year, the Interior Ministry said on Monday. British officials processed 5,373 migrants landing on the shores of southeastern England in the first three months of the year compared to 3,793 last year. AFP

MOSCOW

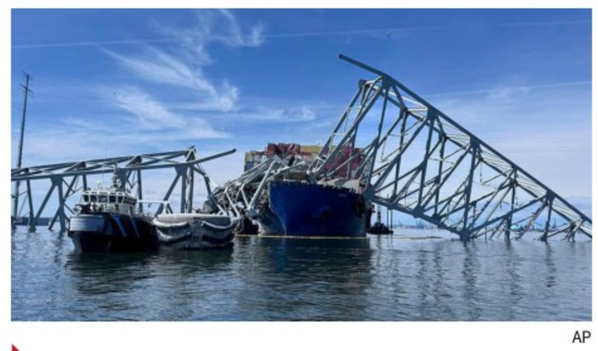
Russia arrests four more plotters of Moscow concert hall attack

AP

Russia's FSB security service has said that four persons arrested on Sunday in a foiled "terror" plot had provided money and arms for the deadly attack on a Moscow concert hall last month. More than 140 people were killed when gunmen stormed the Crocus City Hall venue on March 22 before setting the building on fire. AFP

BALTIMORE

Alternative route opened for ships clearing Baltimore wreckage



AP

The U.S. Coast Guard opened a temporary alternative channel for vessels involved in the clearing of debris at the site of the collapsed Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, part of a phased approach to opening the main channel leading to the port. The bridge collapsed after a container ship rammed into it after losing power. AP

Israeli MPs give approval for Bill to ban Al Jazeera

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

The Israeli Parliament passed a Bill on Monday giving top Ministers the authority to bar from Israel the broadcasts of news channel Al Jazeera – a step Premier Benjamin Netanyahu is poised to take.

This law, which passed by 70 votes to 10, carries the authority to ban the broadcast of content from foreign channels but also allows the closing of their offices in Israel.

Israel had claimed in January that an Al Jazeera staff journalist and a freelancer killed in an air strike in Gaza were "terror operatives".

The following month it said another journalist for the channel, wounded in a separate strike, was a "deputy company commander" with Hamas.

Al Jazeera has fiercely denied the accusations and accused Israel of systematically targeting Al Jazeera employees in Gaza.

Israel withdraws from Shifa hospital after two-week raid

Tel Aviv claims its operation at Gaza's largest hospital has killed some 200 militants and detained hundreds more; WHO says more than 20 patients died and dozens were put at risk during raid

Associated Press
DEIR AL-BALAH

Israel's military withdrew from Gaza's largest hospital early on Monday after a two-week raid, in which it said it killed some 200 militants and detained hundreds more. Palestinian residents said the troops left behind several bodies and a vast swath of destruction.

The military has described the raid on Shifa Hospital as a major battlefield victory in the nearly six-month war. But it came at a time of mounting frustration in Israel, with tens of thousands protesting against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday and demanding he do more to bring home dozens of hostages held in Gaza. It was the largest anti-government demonstration since the start of the war.

The fighting showed that Hamas can still put up resistance even in one of the hardest-hit areas..

Dilapidated state: Palestinians inspect the damage at Gaza's al-Shifa hospital after the Israeli military withdrew on Monday. AFP

The military said that among those killed at Shifa were senior Hamas operatives and other militants who had regrouped there after an earlier raid in November, and that it seized weapons and valuable intelligence.

The UN health agency said more than 20 patients died and dozens were put at risk during the raid, which brought even further destruction to a hospital that had already largely ceased to function.

Bassel al-Hilou said the bodies of seven of his relatives had been found in the wreckage surrounding the hospital. He said they had sought shelter at a neighbour's house after theirs was bombed, but then another strike hit the home where they were staying.

"There was a massacre in my uncle's house," he said. "The situation was indescribable."

Toll unknown

It was not yet known how many Palestinian civilians were killed during the raid. The military denied that its forces harmed any civilians inside the compound.

Israel has accused Hamas of using hospitals for military purposes and has raided several medical facilities. Health officials in Gaza deny those allegations.

Critics accuse the Army of recklessly endangering civilians and of decimating a health sector already overwhelmed with war-wounded. Palestinians say Israeli troops forced hundreds of people living near Shifa to evacuate to the south.

Imamoglu maintains grip on Istanbul mayor post

Agence France-Presse
ISTANBUL

Ekrem Imamoglu's second convincing victory in an Istanbul city election looks set to propel him into the running for the 2028 presidential vote.

The football-loving 52-year-old, who first became the mega-city's mayor in 2019, on Sunday again defeated Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's chosen candidate in the country's economic powerhouse despite a concerted effort to unseat him by the veteran president.

"Tomorrow is a new spring day for our country," Mr. Imamoglu told tens of thousands of euphoric supporters cheering his re-election late on Sunday, wearing his trademark shirtsleeves and rimless glasses.

Mr. Imamoglu, candidate for the social-democratic Republican People's Party (CHP), had spent much of the campaign targeting Mr. Erdogan rather than his nominal opponent, former Environment Minister Murat Kurum.

People's man: Ekrem Imamoglu had spent much of the campaign targeting Tayyip Erdogan rather than his opponent Murat Kurum. AP

Largely unknown in 2019, Mr. Imamoglu that year ended 25 years of rule by Mr. Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its allies in the city of 16 million where the President was once mayor.

Minor hiccup

The smooth talking Mr. Imamoglu was initially stripped of his victory when the vote was controversially annulled. But he won by an even bigger margin in a re-run three months later.

He has since become one of Turkiye's most popular politicians, even as he was targeted with legal action.

In Sunday's election, Mr. Imamoglu ran as the CHP candidate as he failed to get Turkiye's fractured opposition parties to rally around his bid.

The size of his victory will also have stunned those erstwhile allies.

Now Mr. Imamoglu is seen as the most likely potential candidate to beat whoever stands for Erdogan's party in the 2028 presidential election.

Pakistan PM assures Chinese nationals of foolproof security

Press Trust of India
ISLAMABAD

Shehbaz's guarantee comes days after five Chinese workers were killed in a suicide attack

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said his government would ensure foolproof security measures for the Chinese nationals working across the country, days after five Chinese workers were killed in a suicide attack in the country's restive northwest.

A vehicle-borne suicide bomber targeted a convoy of Chinese engineers in the remote Besham area of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa on Tuesday last, killing five Chinese nationals and their Pakistani driver.

"I want to assure you that the government of Pakistan will not leave any stone unturned, will not spare any opportunity to make sure you get the best possible security for your families and yourself," Mr. Sharif told a gathering of the Chinese workers at the site of Dasu Hydropower Project in Kohistan during a visit to express solidarity with them.

At least 12 persons, including the mastermind, have been arrested in connection with the blast.

Dogs' day in Taiwan

Dogs sniff each other from their strollers while waiting for their pet-friendly train along the Taipei Mass Rapid Transit. The Taipei Metro on Sunday began operations of two pet-friendly trains with eight trips throughout the day and stopping at all usual stations along the route. AFP

Court suspends jail terms of Imran, wife in Toshakhana case

Press Trust of India
ISLAMABAD

In a temporary relief to jailed former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, a high court on Monday suspended the 14-year sentence handed out to him and his wife Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana corruption case.

The beleaguered couple were sentenced to 14 years in jail each by an accountability court on January 31 for alleged corruption in state gifts they got from the state depository, days before the general elections.

According to the verdict, Mr. Khan and Ms. Bushra were barred from holding any public office for 10 years and slapped with a fine of Pakistani Rs. 787 million each.

They challenged the conviction in the Islamabad High Court where a two-member Bench headed by IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case.

Imran Khan

On Monday, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) gave temporary relief to the couple in the case by suspending their sentences and granting them bail in the case.

However, the court announced that their appeals against the conviction would be heard after the Eid festival next month.

But Mr. Khan and Ms. Bushra may not be released as they are convicted in other cases.

Germany gives controversial green light to cannabis

Agence France-Presse
BERLIN

Cannabis aficionados lit up in Germany on Monday, as the country became the largest EU nation to legalise recreational use, despite fierce objections from opposition politicians and medical associations.

Under the first step in the much-debated new law, adults over 18 are now allowed to carry 25 grams of dried cannabis and cultivate up to three marijuana plants at home.

The changes leave Germany with some of the most liberal cannabis laws in Europe, alongside Malta and Luxembourg, which legalised recreational use in 2021 and 2023, respectively.

As a first step, adults are now allowed to carry 25 grams of cannabis and cultivate up to three marijuana plants at home. REUTERS

The Netherlands, known for its permissive attitude to the drug, has in recent years taken a stricter approach to counter cannabis tourism.

As the law took effect at midnight, some 1,500 people cheered in central Berlin by the Brandenburg Gate, according to the police, with some lighting up joints in celebration.

Cannabis consumption has been brought out of the "taboo zone", Health Minister Karl Lauterbach said on X, formerly Twitter.

The new law was "better for real addiction help, prevention for children and young people and for combating the black market," Mr. Lauterbach said, responding in part to criticisms levelled against legalisation.

As the next step in the legal reform, from July 1 it will be possible to legally obtain weed through "cannabis clubs" in the country. These regulated associations will be allowed to have up to 500 members each, and will be able to distribute up to 50 grams of cannabis per person per month.

Initial plans for cannabis to be sold via licensed shops were ditched due to EU opposition.

Medical groups have raised concerns that legalisation could lead to an increase in use among young people.

The law has likewise drawn criticism from police, who fear it will be difficult to enforce.

Another potential issue is the implementation of a retroactive amnesty on cannabis-related offences, which could create an administrative headache for the legal system.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND NEURO SCIENCES, (An Institute of National Importance, under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
Hosur Road, Bengaluru - 560 029
No.: NIMH/PU-I(D)TENDER/RC(24-26)/01 & 02/2023-24 Date: 22.03.2024
TENDER NOTIFICATION
Online tender is invited from the Primary Manufacturers or Import License Holders (In respect of imported items only) for supply of various kinds of Drugs, Chemicals, Surgical & Miscellaneous items required by the Institute for the period of **24 Months** for the date of issue of Rate Contract. The validity of Rate Contract is from **01.05.2024 to 31.03.2026**. Last date of submission of tender is **17.04.2024**, tenderer can download tender forms from Central Public Procurement Portal (e-procurement Website) **https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app** and submit the tender in online by enclosing the required documents & fee indicated therein.
Tender ID. 1. 2024_NIMHN_799111_2 for Drugs
2. 2024_NIMHN_800055 _1 for Surgical
Website: **https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app and https://nimhans.ac.in/**
***Sd/-*, Director**

TOSS APPEAL

Manjrekar asks Mumbai crowd to 'behave' while introducing Hardik

SPORTZPICS

Sanjay Manjrekar asked the Wankhede crowd to 'behave' as he was introducing Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya — who was being booed by the fans — at the toss. "Got the two captains here with me. Hardik Pandya, captain of the Mumbai Indians. Big round of applause, ladies and gentlemen. Behave," Manjrekar said.

LOTS TO DISCUSS

BCCI invites IPL owners for a meeting in Ahmedabad on April 16

SPORTZPICS

The BCCI has invited owners of the 10 IPL teams for an informal meeting in Ahmedabad on April 16, on the sidelines of the game between DC and GT at the Narendra Modi Stadium. Likely discussions could be around the mega auction, covering player retentions and potential increase in the auction purse.

POSITIVE VIBE

Dhoni had been playing incredibly well in pre-season: Fleming

K.R. DEEPAK

Stephen Fleming said M.S. Dhoni's knock gave the side a positive vibe despite the loss to DC. "It was beautiful, wasn't it? Even the one-handed one over mid-wicket... he was playing incredibly well in pre-season. He's coming back from a serious operation, but batting superbly. That performance gave us a positive vibe."

THALA EFFECT

CSK plays all its matches in home grounds, jokes Khaleel

K.R. DEEPAK

Visakhapatnam has been designated DC's home ground for two matches, but on Sunday, CSK garnered maximum support as the stadium was awash in a sea of yellow. "CSK plays all its matches in home grounds (laughs). We also respect that and enjoy it, and it is fun as he (Dhoni) is our captain as well," DC's Khaleel said.

Boult bullies and Chahal bamboozles as Rajasthan crushes Mumbai

The strike bowlers pick up three wickets each; Hardik, Tilak help the team make a partial recovery; Parag aces the chase while Madhwal claims three

In the pink of condition: It was a complete performance by Royals who posted their third win on the trot this season. EMMANUAL YOGINI

IPL-17

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Rohit Sharma, the India captain, was cheered. Hardik Pandya was jeered, and cheered as well. Neither Rohit, who continued to be worshipped despite being replaced as Mumbai Indians skipper, nor Hardik, his successor, could withstand the Rajasthan Royals onslaught.

Royals lived up to the reputation of being the best bowling unit in the Indian Premier League to set up a facile win at the Wankhede Stadium.

The left-arm pace duo of Trent Boult and Nandre Burger rattled the Mumbai Indians' top-order. The spin duo of Yuzvendra Chahal and R. Ashwin then ensured the Royals took a firm grip on the game at the break.

Despite Hardik and Tilak Varma's resurrecting partnership of 56 runs for the fifth wicket, Mumbai Indians could only manage 125 for nine.

Akash Madhwal then marked his first outing of the season with an impressive spell but Riyan Parag – who notched up his second successive fifty with consecutive sixes off Gerald Coetzee – took Royals home in the 16th over.

The night, though, belonged to Boult and Chahal. Thrice in his first two overs Boult saw the back of a batter who was facing his first ball. He accounted for Rohit (who poked at one that swung away to be caught by a lunging Sanju Samson) and Naman Dhir (leg-before off one that came into him) off the last two balls of the first over.

At one for two, Dewald Brevis became the earliest Impact Player introduced in IPL. But Boult, whose hat-trick was saved by Ishan Kishan, had Brevis caught at gully by Burger.

When Burger accounted for Ishan in the fifth, at 20 for four, MI was in danger of being bowled out cheaply. In came Hardik and was booed for the fourth time while taking guard. But as Hardik started timing the ball to precision, the jeers turned into cheers. A charge down the wicket for a one-bounced four over mid-on was the highlight of his three fours.

Chahal then enticed Hardik into misiming a heave to long-on to peg MI back. He went on to bamboozle the lower-order to finish with superb figures of three for 11.

Despite Boult's barrage, Chahal's chivalry and Riyan's robust hitting, the night will be remembered for how Hardik was treated on his return to his IPL alma mater.

SCOREBOARD

MUMBAI INDIANS
Ishan Kishan c Samson b Burger 16 *(14b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Rohit Sharma c Samson b Boult 0 *(1b)*, Naman Dhir lbw b Boult 0 *(1b)*, Dewald Brevis (**Impact Player in place of Naman Dhir**) c Burger b Boult 0 *(1b)*, Tilak Varma c Ashwin b Chahal 32 *(29b, 2x6)*, Hardik Pandya c sub (Powell) b Chahal 34 *(21b, 6x4)*, Piyush Chawla c Hetmyer b Avesh 3 *(6b)*, Tim David c Boult b Burger 17 *(24b, 1x4)*, Gerald Coetzee c Hetmyer b Chahal 4 *(9b)*, Jasprit Bumrah (not out) 8 *(9b, 1x4)*, Akash Madhwal (not out) 4 *(5b)*; Extras (b-1, lb-2, w-4): 7; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 125.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-1 (Rohit, 0.5 overs), 2-1 (Dhir, 0.6), 3-14 (Brevis, 2.2), 4-20 (Kishan, 3.3), 5-76 (Hardik, 9.3), 6-83 (Chawla, 11.1), 7-95 (Tilak, 13.2), 8-111 (Coetzee, 16.3), 9-114 (David, 18.3).

ROYALS BOWLING
Boult 4-0-22-3, Burger 4-0-32-2, Avesh 4-0-30-1, Chahal 4-0-11-3, Ashwin 4-0-27-0.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS
Yashasvi Jaiswal c David b Maphaka 10 *(6b, 2x4)*, Jos Buttler c Chawla b Madhwal 13 *(16b, 2x4)*, Sanju Samson b Madhwal 12 *(10b, 3x4)*, Riyan Parag (not out) 54 *(39b, 5x4, 3x6)*, R. Ashwin c Tilak b Madhwal 16 *(16b, 1x4)*, Shubham Dubey (**Impact Player in place of Chahal**) (not out) 8 *(6b, 1x4)*; Extras (b-2, lb-2, w-10): 14; Total (for four wkts. in 15.3 overs): 127.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-10 (Jaiswal, 0.6), 2-42 (Samson, 4.2), 3-48 (Buttler, 6.3), 4-88 (Ashwin, 12.2).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING
Maphaka 2-0-23-1, Bumrah 4-0-26-0, Madhwal 4-0-20-3, Coetzee 2.3-0-36-0, Chawla 3-0-18-0.

Toss: Royals.
PoM: Boult.
RR won by six wickets with 27 balls to spare.

Next assignment

RR: April 6 vs **RCB**
Jaipur, 7.30 p.m.

MI: April 7 vs **DC**
Mumbai, 3.30 p.m.

Points Table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	3	3	0	6	1.249
Kolkata Knight Riders	2	2	0	4	1.047
Chennai Super Kings	3	2	1	4	0.976
Gujarat Titans	3	2	1	4	-0.738
Sunrisers Hyderabad	3	1	2	2	0.204
Lucknow Super Giants	2	1	1	2	0.025
Delhi Capitals	3	1	2	2	-0.016
Punjab Kings	3	1	2	2	-0.337
Royal Challengers	3	1	2	2	-0.711
Mumbai Indians	3	0	3	0	-1.423

RCB top-order needs to be more explosive

Impact player: RCB will look to Maxwell to fire on all cylinders.
K. MURALI KUMAR

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

The batting approach of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) will come under scrutiny when the side takes on Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Tuesday.

In the previous outing here, RCB failed to get a move on and posted 182 for six. This proved to be woefully inadequate, as Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) romped home with 19 deliveries to spare.

The RCB top-order, reluctant to pull the trigger thus far, will seek to start explosively and keep that aggression right through the essay. RCB head coach Andy Flower reiterated the need to get big totals.

"If you look around at the totals that sides have gotten, the aggression shown by all batting sides, there are big scores on offer. Particularly so with the Chinnaswamy (Stadium) being smaller, the ball travels in the air, there are big scores on offer.

"Once our big batters start scoring runs, we will see big scores," Flower said in the press conference here on Monday.

LSG waits on the availability of captain K.L. Rahul, who handed leadership duties to Nicholas Pooran in the last match and came on as an Impact Player.

Bengaluru lad Rahul looked fit as he batted in the nets here on Monday. Pooran clarified in the press conference that a call on Rahul's inclusion in the XI has not been taken yet.

All eyes will be on LSG fast bowler Mayank Yadav, who cranked it up to 155.8 kmph against Punjab Kings on Saturday. The tempting fare of raw pace unleashed awaits the RCB faithful.

Today's match

RCB vs LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

Bengaluru, 7.30 p.m.

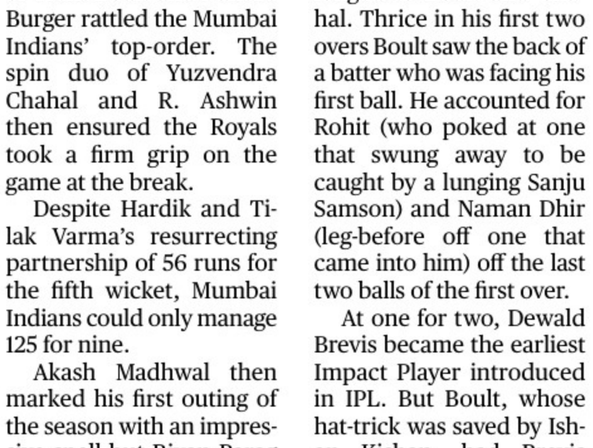
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: **4**
RCB **3** | LSG **1**

PREVIOUS MEETING
RCB won by 18 runs, 2023

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

Mayank has the attributes to play all formats, says Broad

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
CHENNAI



Tearaway debut: To come in and change the rhythm of the game like Mayank did was spectacular, says Broad. K. MURALI KUMAR

Terming the 21-year-old Mayank Yadav's IPL entry as "one of the most spectacular debuts," former England pacer Stuart Broad said on Monday that the young pacer has all the attributes to perform well in Australia in Test cricket and expected him to debut for India in the "next 18 months."

Mayank's fiery pace (150 kph and above) and shorter lengths fetched him three wickets (three for 27) and helped Lucknow Super Giants defeat Punjab Kings by 21 runs on Saturday.

Speaking on the Star Sports Press Room show, Broad said: "It was one of the most spectacular debuts I think you will see from a young bowler – to come in and change the rhythm of the game like he did. He has great attributes – a very calm and patterned run-up with small-strides and a great flow.

"He looks a really fantastic athlete – balanced at the crease with a braced front leg. And what impressed me the most, yes, the 156 kmph, but his line was incredible. And he was beating international quality players for pace.

"He looks like he's got the attributes to play every single format. First of all, India go and play the five Test matches against Australia in Australia. Does he look like he's got the attributes to perform there? Of course! It looks like he's got a good wrist position. I bet he can swing the red ball as well away from the bat.

"Let's let him just develop naturally and develop on a nice upward curve. But I think we'll see him making a debut for India in the next 18 months."

'The result is a fair reflection of how the teams played'

Man of the moment: Mukesh's two strikes in one over swung it Capitals' way against Super Kings. K.R. DEEPAK

S. Dipak Ragav
VISAKHAPATNAM

Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming said his team lost the plot in the PowerPlay with both ball and bat as it suffered its first defeat in the Indian Premier League season to Delhi Capitals here on Sunday.

"I think the result is probably a fair reflection of the way the teams played. We were a little bit off tonight. We were slow to start in the first six overs of each innings," said Fleming.

"I think we gave away too many in our first six when we bowled. When we batted, they were very good, created pressure, and used conditions very well."

The former New Zealand skipper also praised Rishabh Pant's knock and felt it made the difference. "It was excellent batting. It showed that Pant still has a lot of natural flair, and he played really well under pressure."

Pant rediscovering his mojo augurs well for Indian cricket

S. Dipak Ragav
VISAKHAPATNAM

Back in the swing: After a slow start, Pant broke the shackles and played some trademark shots. K.R. DEEPAK

One of the biggest talking points before the start of the tournament was how Rishabh Pant would fare this year. For someone who had to re-learn to walk after suffering life-threatening injuries 14 months ago, the fact that Pant recovered enough to even get back on to the field was astounding.

However, there were doubts about whether he could return to his old self. On Sunday, the 26-year-old dispelled those fears for good with a match-winning knock (51, 32b, 4x4, 3x6) for Delhi Capitals against Chennai Super Kings.

In the first two outings of the IPL, Pant was easing his way back into things. It was understandable, considering he jumped straight into his first competitive match against world-class bowlers.

Against CSK, Pant again started slowly going at run-a-ball for his first 23 runs. The defining moment, though, came in the 18th when he deposited Mustafizur Rahman over square leg for a six with his trademark one-handed pick-up shot in which the bottom hand comes off the bat.

In the next over, Pant showed he was well on track to rediscover his mojo. On a day when Matheesha Pathirana was nailing his yorkers at a ferocious pace – he had knocked over Mitchell Marsh and Tristan Stubbs with 150kmph thunderbolts – Pant hit the Sri Lankan down the ground with panache.

From 23 off 23, Pant needed just eight balls to get his next 28 runs. In the context of the game, his knock proved decisive for the Capitals.

That Pant got closer to his best in just his third outing meant Indian cricket could hope for the match-winner's return soon.

INBRIEF

Pankaj Advani claims CCI billiards classic title

Pankaj Advani constructed two humongous breaks of 801 and 460 to beat Englishman David Causier 1836-743 in a lop-sided four-hour final of the all-India CCI billiards classic in Mumbai on Monday. This was Advani's fourth successive triumph at this venue. He claimed the CCI snooker classic over the last two years and now retained the billiards title.

Mirabai ends third in WC, set to qualify for Paris Olympics

Tokyo Olympics silver-medallist Mirabai Chanu all but qualified for the 2024 Paris Games after she finished third in the women's 49kg Group-B event of the IWF World Cup in Phuket, Thailand, on Monday. Returning from a six-month injury lay off, Mirabai lifted a total of 184kg (81kg+103kg) at the tournament, which is the final and a mandatory qualifier for the Paris Olympics. "It feels incredible to come back after an injury. Almost every lift I made today felt clean, clear, and powerful, and I'm leaving this competition feeling strong and confident," said Mirabai.

Maharashtra teams reign in National kho-kho

Maharashtra emerged champion in both the men's and women's sections in the 56th National kho kho championships in New Dehi on Monday. In an exciting men's final, Maharashtra and Railways were tied 32-32 at the end of two innings. In the extended game, Maharashtra prevailed 52-50. In women's final, Maharashtra beat Airports Authority of India (AAI) 18-16. The champion teams were presented ₹300,000 each and the runners-up won ₹200,000 each.

Semifinal results: Men: Maharashtra bt Kolhapur 30-28; Railways bt Odisha 24-22. **Women:** Maharashtra bt Odisha 24-20; AAI bt Delhi 32-10.

Sri Lanka on top in second Test against Bangladesh

Asitha Fernando claimed four for 34 as Sri Lanka bowled out Bangladesh for 178 to take a massive 353-run lead in the first innings on the third day of the second Test in Chittagong on Monday. The visitors were left struggling in the second innings, reaching 102 for six at stumps.

The scores: Sri Lanka 531 & 102 for six in 25 overs (Mahmud 4/51) vs. Bangladesh 178 in 68.4 overs (Zakir 54, Asitha 4/34).

Kean Yew, Intanon take singles honours in Spain Masters

Singapore's Loh Kean Yew beat France's Toma Junior Popov 21-11, 15-21, 22-20 to win the men's singles crown in the Spain Masters Super 300 badminton tournament at Madrid on Sunday. The women's title was claimed by Ratchanok Intanon, who beat compatriot Supanida Katethong 21-12, 21-9 in the summit clash.

Nelly Korda emerges the winner of Ford Championship

World No.1 Nelly Korda marched to her third victory in three LPGA tour starts on Sunday, firing seven birdies in a flawless seven-under par 65 to win the Ford Championship in Arizona by two strokes. Korda became the first LPGA pro to win three consecutive starts since Thailand's Ariya Jutanugarn in 2016. She's two shy of matching the LPGA record of five consecutive victories, first accomplished by Nancy Lopez in 1978 and matched by Annika Sorenstam in 2004-05.

I am now more mature and responsible, says Titans' mainstay Sai Sudharsan

The 22-year-old left-hander, a vital cog in Gujarat's set-up, feels the exposure to different conditions across the globe has helped him grow

Calm and collected: Sai Sudharsan is a smart reader of the game. VIJAY SONEJI

IPL-17

N. Sudarshan
AHMEDABAD

At first glance, B. Sai Sudharsan isn't flashy. He is patient, bats in an uncomplicated fashion and doesn't attract a lot of attention. Over the last two years though, the incremental gains have accrued to such an extent that he is now impossible to ignore.

On Sunday at the Narendra Modi Stadium, the 22-year-old carried Gujarat Titans to victory against Sunrisers Hyderabad with a solid 45 (36b, 4x4, 1x6). In three matches so far, Sai Sudharsan has been GT's most consistent batter, and was also the top-scorer (45) in the opening win over Mumbai Indians.

To be sure, Sai Sudharsan's knocks aren't of the variety that usually make heads turn in the shortest format. But he is a smart reader of the game and is adaptable. In last year's IPL final against Chennai Super Kings, he hit 96 off 47 balls. Against SRH two days ago, he buckled down on a sticky wicket, took the game deep, enabling the team deliver the knockout punch.

This perhaps is indicative of his growing batsmanship. Between the 2023 IPL final and now, Sai Sudharsan has played in the English county championship for Surrey (as an overseas pro despite being uncapped for India), featured for India-A before making his ODI debut last December against South Africa away.

"I feel playing more games, for India-A and then for the country, has given me some maturity," he said after Sunday's win. "Compared to last year, I feel more responsible. And the skills have improved as well. I am getting exposed to difficult conditions, international conditions and I am learning about what I should improve."

At a time when batters are increasingly picky about formats they play, Sai Sudharsan has been stellar across all three varieties. He is a vital cog in the GT set-up, made half-centuries in his first two ODIs and left a lasting impression in red-ball cricket with knocks of 117 and 97 versus the visiting England Lions earlier this year.

"I believe the difference is in risk-taking," he said. "The decisions I take change for every format according to the match-situation and conditions. Preparation is more often similar, but it is about the amount of risk I can take, and I prepare accordingly."

Rodrygo nets twice as Real Madrid consolidates LaLiga top spot

EURO LEAGUES

Associated Press
MADRID

Rodrygo thrived in the absence of Vinicius Junior as Real Madrid beat Athletic Bilbao 2-0 on Sunday to keep an eight-point lead over Barcelona in LaLiga.

Rodrygo scored both goals and Madrid maintained its comfortable lead at the top after Barcelona had won 1-0 at Las Palmas on Saturday.

Vinicius didn't play because of a suspension over yellow cards, but Jude Bellingham was back in the squad after missing two straight league games because of a red-card suspension. The influential England international set up Rodrygo's second goal in Madrid's third straight league win.

Rodrygo's opener came with a beautiful shot into the top corner from just outside the area eight minutes into the match at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Meanwhile, title rivals Manchester City and Arsenal played out a goalless draw in their Premier League match at the Etihad Stadium on Sunday, leaving Liverpool at the top with a lead of two points.

The results:

LaLiga: Real Madrid 2 (Rodrygo 7, 73) bt Athletic Bilbao 0.

Serie A: Bologna 3 (Orsolini 14, Saelemaekers 44, Lykogiannis 90+2) Salernitana 0; Cagliari 1 (Sulemana 74) drew with Verona 1 (Bonazzoli 30); Sassuolo 1 (Defrel 41) drew with Udinese 1 (Thauvin 44).

Curling it in: Bilbao defenders found it difficult to contain Rodrygo. REUTERS

Many new faces in Hockey India women's assessment squad

Press Trust of India
BENGALURU

Veterans like Savita Punia and Vandana Katariya made the cut among a host of new faces in Hockey India's jumbo assessment squad of 60 for a seven-day camp which started here on Monday, at the end of which trials to select 33 national probables will be held on April 6 and 7.

The 33 probables will be for future camps and international exposure tours.

"The 60-player core group has been shortlisted following the recent 14th HI senior women's National in Pune," HI said

The players will report coach Ankitha B.S., who has been handed the role after Janneke Schopman resigned from the job. HI said Ankitha will hold the position "until such time that a suitable chief coach is appointed".

Players selected for assessment camp:

Goalkeepers: Savita, Sonal Minj, Bichu Devi Kharibam, Madhuri Kindo, Bansari Solanki, Promila Kr., Ramya Kurmapu.

Defenders: Udita, Nikki Pradhan, Ropni Kumari, Lalhlunmawii, Preeti, T. Suman Devi, Anjana Dungdung, Nishi Yadav.

Midfielders: Monika, Sonika, Neha, Mahima Choudhary, Nisha, Jyoti, Salima Tete, Manashri Shedage, Akshata Abaso Dhekale, Lalruatfeli, Marina Lalramnghaki, Prabhleen Kaur, Manisha Chauhan, Ishika Chaudhary, Ritanyna Sahu, Jyoti Chhatri, Ajmina Kujur, Sujata Kujur, Kruthika S.P., Mahima Tete, Mamta Bhat, Edula Jyothi, Anisha Dungdung, Bhavna Khade, Maxima Toppo.

Forwards: Deepika, Sharmila Devi, Navneet Kaur, Deepika Soreng, Sangita Kumari, Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Rutaja Dadaso Pisal, Lalrindiki, Lalremsiami, Vertika Rawat, Preeti Dubey, Hritika Singh, Mariana Kujur, Mumtaz Khan, Taranpreet Kaur, Baljeet Kaur, Vandana Katariya, Dipi Monika Toppo, Kajal S. Atpadkar, Manju Chorsiya.

Nagal. GETTY IMAGES

Nagal attains career-high ATP ranking of 95

Press Trust of India
LONDON

Sumit Nagal on Monday achieved a career-high ranking of 95 in the ATP singles chart, following impressive results in recent times. His previous best was 97 in February, which he had attained after winning the Chennai Open, an ATP Challenger event.

Nagal made headlines in January after became the first Indian to beat a seeded player – Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan – in the Australian Open before losing to Shang Juncheng of China in the second round.

Mumbai City breezes past Hyderabad FC

ISL-10

Sports Bureau

Mumbai City FC strengthened its position at the top of the table with a clinical 3-0 victory against Hyderabad FC at the Gachibowli Stadium in Hyderabad in the Indian Super League on Monday.

The Islanders now have 44 points from 20 games, five ahead of Mohun Bagan Super Giant (39 from 19 matches).

The visitor swept aside the challenge by HFC which must have been buoyant after notching its first win of the campaign against Chennaiyin FC.

The result: Hyderabad FC 0 lost to Mumbai City FC 3 (Chhangte 18, Mehtab Singh 32, Pereyra Diaz 90-pen).

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Naveen stars for Blue Star

A brace from Naveen Kumar helped Blue Star FC beat Footlong FC 2-0 in a KSFA c-division league match here on Monday.

The results: Blue Star FC 2 (N. Naveen Kumar 7, 20+1) bt Footlong FC 0.

Samurai Bangalore FC 1 (R. Nishanth 25) drew with TAL FC 1 (Chirag Chinnappa 60+3).

Ronaldo FC 3 (S. Sanju Kumar 32, 34, K.K. Vimaljith 38) bt Blue Diamond FC 0.

Universal Blues FC 2 (A. Ajmal 7, E. Mahendra Kumar 13) bt Mahesh Raj United 0.

Easy for Parikrma

Parikrma FC recorded a comfortable 3-0 win over Roots FS in the BDFA A-division league here on Monday.

The results: A-div.: Parikrma FC 3 (Thangjalam Haokip 7, 30, Mangalenthang Singsit 78) bt Roots FS 0; Bangalore City FC 1 (Ayush Himanshu Panchamiya 49) bt BTM 0.

C-div.: Young Gems FC 3 (Kipa 2, Bharath 5, 13) bt Sporting Youths FC 0; Konkan FC 2 (Robin 35, Anup 54) drew with Bangalore Wanderers 2 (Sridhar 26, Murali 30+1); Triveni FC 4 (Sulaiman 6, R. Sanjay 22, 30, Rohith 39) bt City Club FC 0.

Climbing the ladder: Sinner will move to a career-high second in the ATP world rankings with this victory. AFP

Sinner has it easy against Dimitrov, wins ATP Miami Open title

TENNIS

Agence France-Presse
MIAMI

Italy's Jannik Sinner won the ATP Miami Open Masters 1000 title on Sunday with a 6-3, 6-1 victory over Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov in the final at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami. Sinner's third title of the season means he will move to a career-high second in the ATP world rankings on Monday ahead of Spain's Carlos Alcaraz.

Sinner finished the hard court season in electric form, having won 25 of his last 26 matches – the only defeat coming to Alcaraz in the Indian Wells semifinal.

The Italian took care of business in 72 minutes and never looked in danger after he broke in the fifth game of the first set, facing just one break point in the entire match.

"As this tournament went on, I felt better and better. Today's performance was good. I'm just proud of how I handled the situation," Sinner said.

Former Asiad star Deanna Syme Tewari passes away

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

Former Asian Games athlete and a torchbearer at 1982 Delhi edition, Deanna Syme Tewari, passed away in Dubai last Saturday.

She was 85. Deanna Syme represented the erstwhile Mysore State, for whom she won the long jump gold at the 1957 National Athletics Championship and at the 1958 National Games.

She represented India at the 1962 Asian Games in Jakarta and was a torch-bearer – alongside hockey icon (late) Balbir Singh Sr. – at the 1982 Asian Games in New Delhi.

LIVE TELECAST

Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka: 2nd Test, day 4, FanCode, 9.30 a.m.

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.

ISL: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.

Premier League: SS Select 1, 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 12 a.m. onwards (Wednesday)